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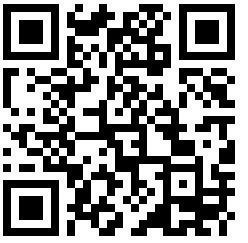

The Friends' Ambulance Unit

1914-1919

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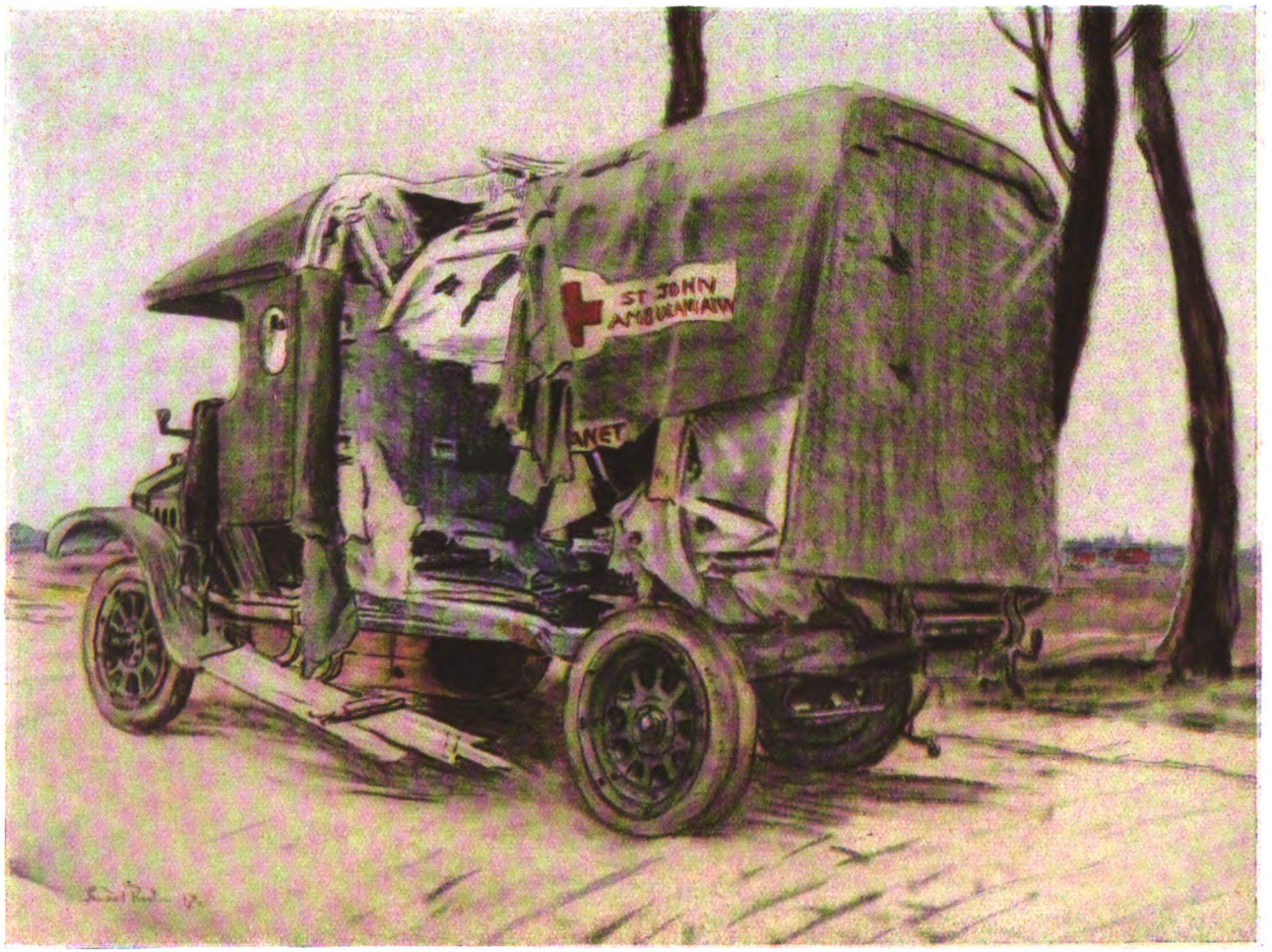

Plate I. A Direct Hit. Frontispiece

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The Friends' Ambulance Unit

1914 - 1919

A RECORD

EDITED BY

MEABURN TATHAM and JAMES E. MILES

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Dedicated

To the Memory of

Those who Gave up their Lives

in the Service of the Unit

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Introduction

"YOUTH is what I love for ever," sang Euripides, "fame and the crown of the East, and chambers piled with gold; what are they all compared with youth?" That is the claim I find irresistible. I am asked, by those whose request after five years of comradeship I cannot deny, to write a few words of introduction to their modest book of wonderful endeavour and not less wonderful deeds. I do so with pleasure and with pride. For here is a record of the adventure and chivalry of Youth, a story of fierce conflict of ideals in a drab and grey setting, a harvest of splendid achievement. As Sophocles said in *Antigone*:

Much is there passing strange,
Nothing surpassing mankind.
He it is loves to range
Over the Ocean hoar,
Through the surge's roar,
South winds raging behind.

The situation in its essentials is described in a word. A band of English Quaker youths found themselves in a land of darkening shadow in the autumn of 1914. They could not by their religious bonds join the Colours; nor, by the same bonds, could they return to college or calling. So they set forth on a quest of chivalry —a quest which became a conquest—the service of healing, and "the care for him who shall have borne the battle." No one bade them go; no well-tried Captain cried "follow me"; no law said "you must"; it was their own affair, spontaneous, springing up like a well of water.

Now, five years later, I am to try and write down in cold print what the motives were which took the first group of these young Quakers and their friends to the front as an Ambulance Unit—a rather motley band of lawyers, doctors, students, engineers, surveyors, accountants, business men, and workers in many arts and crafts. I think there were three motives. First, they were not content to remain passive with folded hands in the midst of the conflict, because of their religious views, upbringing, or conscientious

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objection to war. Secondly, they desired to stand beside their companions and friends who went to fight, and share their dangers, their self-renunciation, devotion and sacrifice. Thirdly, they were impressed with the inadequacy of the means and agencies then existing for dealing with the miseries and desolations of war, particularly in the invaded portions of Belgium. I think undoubtedly these were the moving factors at the outset, but it is equally certain that late in 1915, owing to the circumstances of the war, the purpose of the Unit matured and became more formulated. Broadly speaking, the Unit settled down at that time to fulfil a two-fold service, namely, (*a*) to provide through the means of an efficient Ambulance Unit, a good and sound instrument, to be skilfully used in the ministry of compassion to men, of whatever nation, caught in the trammels of war or in its train of suffering and death, and (*b*) to provide this means in such a way as to express in some degree the principles of the Society of Friends.

We have never concealed from ourselves or from others that to organise a Quaker Ambulance Unit in the war zone was a hazardous and rather difficult proposition. It is certain that without the consideration and sympathy of the authorities it would have been impracticable. The essential complexity of the proposition was greatly increased in 1916 when a system of compulsory military service was imposed upon the youth of the nation by Act of Parliament. For though that Act contained wise and equitable provisions for the exemption of the genuine conscientious objector from military service, the actual local administration did not, in practice and in all respects, prove entirely adequate or just. Perhaps this was inevitable; but however that may be, the situation made it necessary for the Friends' Ambulance Unit to modify its arrangements in order to accept as members only those referred to it by the Tribunals or the Military authorities, and only such referred men as were members of the Society of Friends or closely associated with it, and who were really desirous of joining the Unit. Throughout its history the Unit remained a voluntary body, free from direct military control and constituted of unpaid volunteers, though obviously after the passage of the Military Service Acts some men entered its ranks who would not otherwise have offered themselves for this particular service. Indeed, as it was, many of the men were quite unsuited to ambulance or hospital work, and with the approval of the authorities, a General Service Section of the Unit was formed, to undertake various kinds of approved national work in England or elsewhere (educational, agricultural, etc.). The members of the Unit have recognised throughout that exemption from military service carried with it no immunity from public duty and no absolution from public service.

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In addition to the inherent difficulties of an unenlisted, voluntary, Quaker Ambulance Unit, it must also be recognised that in time of war it has its own severe limitations. Its character, organisation, purpose and motive are liable to be canvassed and misunderstood by friend and foe; its actual work must include an immense amount of monotonous and wearisome drudgery, for it must do everything for itself unaided and unassisted; and in being true to its own principles, it must be watchful not to become an integral part of military operations. It was on this last ground that the Unit was not allowed to undertake a casualty clearing station in the fighting line, and that there came a time when circumstances made it necessary for it to withdraw from certain of its work at the King George Hospital in London, and from the two hospital ships. However attractive such work, the Unit was not willing to modify the principles upon which it was founded.

The work accomplished is set out, in plain and unvarnished terms, in the pages which follow. The picture is painted in grey colours, and rightly so. It was a very grey and monotonous undertaking. But the reader who reads between the lines, and reflects that most of this work was done amid the dullness and mud of the war zone in Flanders, will see in it no lack of good sense and proper workmanship, and, I hope, no lack of the right spirit. The Unit was established in September, 1914, and the first party left London for Dunkirk on October 31st. It began with 43 men, it ended with over 600 in France and Flanders alone; it began with a donation of a hundred pounds, it received ultimately in voluntary contributions £138,000; it began not knowing whither it went or what were to be its duties, it finished having been responsible for a comprehensive organisation of ambulance and hospital service in many fields. It had the working of a dozen hospitals, the majority of which it actually established and managed—at Dunkirk, Ypres, Poperinghe, Hazebrouck and elsewhere in Flanders—"a corner of a foreign field that is for ever England"—and at York, Birmingham, London and Richmond at home. At the Queen Alexandra Hospital at Dunkirk—graciously christened by Her Majesty Queen Alexandra—12,000 in-patients were treated, and a still larger total number at the other centres; 27,000 inoculations against typhoid fever were made in Belgium, and thus the ravages of this disease were stayed and the armies protected; 15,000 Belgian refugees were fed and a vast quantity of clothing was distributed; lace-making centres were created, temporary schools and orphanages were established, provision was made for milk distribution and for water purification in Belgium; tens of thousands of soldiers were received at the three recreation huts at Dunkirk; the two hospital ships transported overseas 33,000 cases; the ambulance convoys ran more than two

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and a half million kilometres and carried over 260,000 sick or wounded soldiers of all nations; and the four ambulance trains conveyed 520,000 patients. This work was done by an *unenlisted* and *unpaid* band of young men, providing through the support of their friends their own staff, equipment and expenditure. Twenty of these peace lovers made the supreme sacrifice; many others were wounded or invalided, and ninety-six were awarded the *Croix de Guerre* or other decoration for valour.

It is not possible justly to estimate or appraise the work described in this book. Some things, however, may be said about it; it was long continued, unbroken and arduous; much of it was a monotonous round of manual service, hewing of wood and drawing of water; some of it, in stores and garage, was, and could only be, preparatory and conducive to an unseen end; for merely to keep such a Unit fed and clothed and its fleet of motor cars and ambulances in working condition was, in itself, a heavy undertaking; some of it was highly skilled; all of it in ultimate issue served to bring relief and succour to hundreds of thousands of men, women and children in the Valley of the Shadow—British, Belgians, French, Germans, Russians, Serbians, Chinese, Egyptians, Hindoos, Negroes—all races and kindreds and tongues, a welter of humanity in a common woe, who by the roadside fell into the hands of the Friends' Ambulance Unit. Personally, perhaps, my predilection and occupation lead me to select the direct medical service of the Unit as its brightest chapter of achievement. Its medical and surgical work, its hospitals at home and abroad, its immense out-patient service in Flanders, its sanitary cordon against typhoid fever in Belgium were all of outstanding merit and reflect the highest credit upon the doctors, nurses and men. "I should like to acknowledge," wrote Colonel Sir William Leishman, in 1915, in reference to the anti-typhoid scheme, "the valuable assistance in this work which has been given by a certain voluntary unit—the Red Cross Unit belonging to the Society of Friends—which has been working gallantly in the Ypres and Poperinghe districts, under difficult conditions." Similar evidence has been furnished by Dr. Goodall.* Perhaps the most courageous and daring work was accomplished by the ambulance convoys, but for regularity and discipline the conduct of the ambulance trains and the ships was also all that it should have been. For "all-round merit" two of the trains in the charge of the Unit were officially gazetted as first and second among all the ambulance trains of the British Expeditionary Force. Of course, in so large a body of young men not all were heroes; there were many mistakes of judgment, some falterings and failures; but we shall remember always many great days of this Quest and Conquest

* Transactions of Royal Society of Medicine, November 28th, 1915, and February, 1919.

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which fill us with gratitude and pride and humility. Whilst it is not for me to praise the Unit, I think it is not unbecoming to add that the Committee of the Unit are unanimous in the belief that Philip Baker, Leslie Maxwell, Meaburn Tatham, William Mordey, and Humphrey Nockolds abundantly proved themselves to be worthy leaders of a worthy and valiant company of men. In dark hours and bright, in defeat or victory, all alike followed the Gleam.

We offer our respectful thanks and humble duty to His Majesty the King, Her Majesty Queen Alexandra, and His Majesty the King of the Belgians, for their gracious encouragement of the Unit's work. We wish also to place on record our warm appreciation of the consideration which has been shown to us by the Governments of Great Britain, France and Belgium, and of the kindness and unfailing support of the British and American Red Cross Societies. We are in debt to the late Lord Kitchener, Lord Derby, Mr. Tennant, Mr. Macpherson, Sir Alfred Keogh, Sir Arthur Stanley, Sir Arthur Lawley, Lord Donoughmore, Colonel Bicknell, Colonel Van Schaick, Mr. Philip Sarell, British Consul at Dunkirk, and many others; and we desire to record our appreciation and gratitude to that great company of friends and encouragers, of all classes and callings, rich and poor, Quaker and non-Quaker, in many parts of the world, who by their continued and generous support made the work of the Unit possible.

When we look back over the record of the war, we see—amid much that is terrible, loathsome and soul-destroying—many bright and immortal pages of worth, of daring, of endurance and of sacrifice, inestimable and immeasurable. Not least among them, in my view, will be some of the labours and endeavours of the little group of men and women to which this book refers—an unpaid, obscure and voluntary Unit of the Red Cross, untouched by the glamour of war, but in some degree healers of its wounds, and earnestly desiring to be in deed as well as word, "helpers and friends of mankind." I do not say that these men were better than other men, but I think that, not less than other men, they too were heralds of a great Ideal. When one considers them it does not seem extravagant to think once more the thoughts of Thucydides after him—for the best of these men possessed the fighter's daring, the wise man's understanding of his duty, the good man's self-discipline in its performance; they also had a pleasant and sustaining fund of good humour which brightened the dark hours of their own life and that of thousands of others; the best of them, like the best soldiers, whatever else they withheld, in theory or in practice, disdained to deprive the Commonwealth of their services, but yielded their lives as a willing offering on its behalf; the best of them knew, perhaps

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almost unconsciously, that, in the words of Pericles, the secret of happiness is service and freedom, and the secret of freedom a brave heart. Thus with so many others on the field of battle some of them laid down their lives for their ideal, "and received, each for his own memory, praise that will never die, and with it the greatest of all sepulchres, a home in the minds of men where their glory remains. For the whole earth is the sepulchre of famous men; and their story is not graven only on stone over their native earth, but lives on far away, without visible symbol, woven into the stuff of other men's lives."

GEORGE NEWMAN,

Chairman.

London, 1919.

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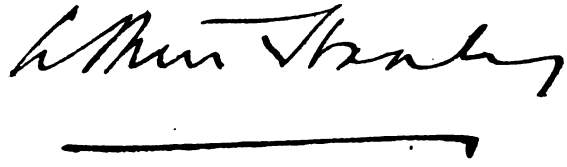
Foreword

BY

The HON. SIR ARTHUR STANLEY, G.B.E., C.B., M.V.O.,
Chairman of the British Red Cross Society and the Order of St. John.

The Friends' Ambulance Unit formed an integral part of, and worked in close association with, the British Red Cross Society and the Order of St. John from October, 1914, until the end of the war. During that time I had many opportunities of seeing the members of the Unit at work both at home and abroad, and it is now my privilege to invite all those interested in adventure, loyalty, endurance, skill, devotion to duty and self-sacrifice, to read what is written on the succeeding pages of this volume. The work of this Unit was carried through with exceptional energy and devotion, and it formed one of the brightest chapters in the record of the British Red Cross Society and the Order of St. John. The Society of Friends has abundant reason to be satisfied with the way in which its young crusaders obeyed the call.



British Red Cross Society.
7th February, 1920.

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Preface

IF the career of the Friends' Ambulance Unit had ended in the spring of 1915, its history might have been told in a single chronological narrative. The enterprise which began with the work at the station sheds in Dunkirk and culminated in the days of the Second Battle of Ypres was sufficiently compact to be treated as a comprehensible whole. But from that time onwards, the more the Unit grew in numbers, the more divergent both in place and in kind its activities became. Civilian relief work spread throughout uninvaded Flanders; the Ambulance Convoys played their part with French Divisions fighting in the Champagne and the Argonne; the Ambulance Trains threaded their way about the vast network of lines behind the British front. Its members staffed many hospitals abroad and at home; they worked in offices and in recreation huts; they ploughed the waters of the Mediterranean, and they helped to gather the harvests of England.

We have divided the history into two main portions. The first and major portion deals with the original Unit which went to France in 1914, and traces its work and expansion over a period of nearly four-and-a-half years. It includes also an account of the two Hospital Ships. The second part records more briefly the work of the Home Service Sections. Even in the case of the Unit in France, which was a coherent body under a central administration, we have been compelled after the first chapter to abandon the consecutive narrative, and, at the risk of some overlapping and repetition, to tell the stories of its component sections in isolated chapters. The result has been, we know, to make the Unit appear less unified than it really was, and perhaps to lose sight of many interesting aspects of its constitution. But for a consecutive story to have been intelligible it must have discarded large masses of important detail. Much of what we have included will no doubt make plain reading, even as much of the work the Unit undertook was in itself monotonous. Nevertheless, it was by what it accomplished for the relief of suffering that the F.A.U. justified its existence; and, however inartistic the result may be, we have been content to follow what we believe to be the only method by which an adequate record of all its achievements can be preserved.

For our material we have relied partly on great quantities of documents brought to London from Dunkirk and elsewhere—documents bewilderingly profuse in the case of some sections and periods, in the case of others regrettably sparse. Among them have been many valuable reports written by members of the Unit from time to time during its existence. We have also been greatly

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helped by the individual French Convoy and Ambulance Train histories, which have been prepared or published during the present year; on their pages we have unblushingly made frequent raids. We were fortunate, too, in having the Unit's collection of drawings and pictures available for purposes of illustration, and we must acknowledge especially the permission of Ernest Procter to reproduce some of his work done for the Unit's records.

Finally we have to express a very great debt of gratitude to all those who have so ungrudgingly responded to our appeal for accounts of those portions of the Unit's work with which they were specially familiar. One or two of these contributions appear practically in the form in which they were written; most have been modified to fit in with the general scheme. The list of all our helpers, is, we fear, too long to reproduce here. Suffice it to say that collectively they are responsible for a large share of any merit which this volume may possess.

Balliol College,
Oxford.
October 31st, 1919.

MEABURN TATHAM.
JAMES E. MILES.

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BOOK I

—

The Foreign Section

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CHAPTER I

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE UNIT.

THE formation of an ambulance unit of young Friends for service on one of the Allied fronts was first mooted so early in the war as August 7th, 1914. In those days of suspense and uncertainty it was difficult to say exactly what part could be taken by a small body of men such as was proposed; and it would have been still more difficult perhaps to foresee its varied developments both at home and abroad before the struggle had ended. But there could be little doubt that somewhere or somehow there would be need for the services of such a unit, and with those who first discussed it, among whom should be mentioned Allan R. Baker, E. H. Gilpin, Arnold S. Rowntree and Sir George Newman, the project met with approval. Before many days had passed the first step towards its realisation was taken by Philip Baker, who was known already to a wide circle as a former President of the Cambridge Union Society and as a distinguished athlete. Over his signature an appeal for volunteers to form an ambulance unit was published in the *Friend* of August 21st, and a satisfactory response was not slow in coming from many different parts of the country.

Early in September a training camp for those who had offered their services was established at Jordans, in Buckinghamshire, where about sixty men, mostly young Friends in residence at Oxford or Cambridge, assembled to prepare for active service as early as possible. At first, of course, the whole venture had something necessarily rather tentative about it, for it was still very hard to penetrate the fog of war sufficiently to see what openings were practicable for such a unit. No one knew for certain what manner of work (if any) they were likely to find, nor how soon they might expect to set foot in the war zone, nor even in which theatre of war they might find themselves. But meanwhile they could not do better than try to fit themselves for whatever the fortune of war might bring them, and the course of training at the Jordans camp was, at any rate, a comprehensive one. It included instruction in first-aid to the wounded, stretcher-drill, sanitation and hygiene, and field-cookery. Physical training was of no less importance, and took the form chiefly of route marches, a very pleasant occupation in that rolling Buckinghamshire countryside. When some weeks of a strenuous out-of-doors life had thoroughly hardened the members of the camp, long-distance treks were undertaken to Reading and to Cambridge. In the meantime P. J. Baker and several influential persons interested in the new unit were making every effort to find opportunities of utilising the store of energy thus accumulating. This was a discouraging business, interview

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following interview with little result. At one time a scheme for proceeding as an ambulance to Serbia was on the point of being put in hand, when suddenly the plan fell through, and the hope of seeing active service before the war came to an early end seemed about to recede from view altogether. Other negotiations showed little hope of maturing, at any rate for some time, and about the middle of October, after six weeks' existence, the Jordans camp was broken up. The men were disbanded to return for the time being to their homes or to their studies, not in any way giving up their intentions, but only to await further developments.

Fortunately these arrived sooner than was expected. During the last week of October the Belgian Army, as all the world knows, was holding the line of the Yser with the French against the furious attacks of the northern German armies who strove for the mastery of the Channel ports. In their stubborn resistance the Belgians incurred enormous losses and their medical resources were strained to breaking point. Just at this time Geoffrey Winthrop Young, already well known as one of the earliest war correspondents on active service, returned from France and brought news to Philip Baker of the desperate straits in which the Belgian Army found itself. From his and from other accounts it was clear that there was here urgent need for help and that it must come quickly or be too late. On October 26th, Philip Baker and Geoffrey Young, along with one or two others responsible for the Unit, discussed the position with Sir Arthur Stanley (then Hon. Arthur Stanley, M.P.), the Chairman of the Joint War Committee of the British Red Cross Society and the Order of St. John of Jerusalem. They asked his acceptance of the Unit under the auspices of the Joint War Committee, and his help in providing ambulances and equipment to enable them to set off for Belgium at the earliest possible moment. Both were readily granted, and it was arranged that they should leave London on October 30th, bearing the name of the "First Anglo-Belgian Ambulance Unit."

The long-sought opportunity had at last been found, and thanks largely to the ready assistance of Sir Arthur Stanley and the Joint War Committee it was possible to undertake the work the Unit so much desired. These days marked the beginning of a long and invaluable connection between the Unit and the Joint War Committee which lasted throughout the war. During the next four years and more, the Unit was to have many dealings with that great organisation of which Sir Arthur Stanley was the head, and to him and his colleagues, for their generous help and kindly advice in many matters, it owed a deep debt of gratitude.

But there was much else to be done before the day of departure. The scattered members were summoned by telegraph and telephone to assemble again in London. Doctors and dressers to accompany the party had to be found. All sorts of stores and equipment had to be purchased and got ready for shipment. Uniforms had to be obtained for all of the party. Authorisation to make the journey had to be secured, and facilities for transport to Dunkirk, as the seaport nearest to Belgium, were granted by the Admiralty. Not least

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Plate II — LA PATRIE (THE SHEDS, DUNKIRK, 1914). — Facing p. 4

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important was the establishment of a Committee to represent the new Unit's interests on this side of the Channel and to provide the necessary support for its work abroad. A Committee was formed on October 29th under the chairmanship of Sir George Newman, M.D., including in its number names which represented some of the most influential elements in the Society of Friends.

Throughout all the vicissitudes of the Unit and its great expansion in many fields, the Chairman remained at his post, in constant touch with the successive Commanding Officers, with the Principal Medical Officer, and with the heads of the scattered sections, and aided in his responsibility by the loyal and able support not only of the Committee, but of the staff of the London Office, the work of which is described elsewhere in these pages.

There was some reason, perhaps, for congratulation when the first party of the Unit was able to set out from London, with their preparations successfully carried out, on the evening of Friday, October 30. They numbered forty-three all told, including three doctors and six dressers, and took with them eight ambulance cars and several tons of stores. So far as was possible they were equipped to deal with any ambulance work that they might find before them. It is hardly necessary to add that the members were unpaid workers, as they were throughout the whole of the Unit's existence. In command of the Unit was Philip Baker, who had as his second-in-command Geoffrey Young, and as his Adjutant Leslie Maxwell. These leaders had not an easy task before them, though the personnel in their charge left nothing to be desired either in ability or loyalty. But only two of the whole number had already any previous experience of the unfamiliar life of the war zone: the second-in-command himself, and H. W. Nevinson, the distinguished writer and traveller, who accompanied them for the first few weeks. For the rest this was a journey into the unknown. The war was still something altogether foreign to ordinary life, and to cross over to an area of war was almost like setting out for a new world; one scarcely expected to find ordinary mortals carrying on their lives in this *terra incognita* vaguely termed "the front." Altogether it is no wonder that there was a sense of high adventure in the air when they found themselves now on the way. They left behind them a valuable support in their Committee in London, whose work indeed alone made possible their departure for the scene of action, but in all that lay before them they would have to find their own way among exceptional difficulties. Arrived at Dover late that night, the party was met with discouraging news that might well have made them turn on their tracks to London and draw up a new plan of campaign. The Belgian Army, they learned, had been withdrawn from the fighting-line in order to rest and make good its losses, and thus was unlikely to need medical help for a long time to come. The purpose of the Unit's voyage seemed to have been frustrated before it was fairly begun. Nevertheless, after some deliberation, it was decided to go forward and to cross as arranged to Dunkirk in the hope that some useful work would open up in another direction. How fully this decision was justified was shown by later events.

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Early next morning, after a short and almost sleepless night in a Seamen's Home, the party left Dover. A cold autumnal mist hung over the Channel as the transport left the harbour with her escort of two destroyers. She had scarcely reached the open sea when the destroyers were seen to dart off at top speed and disappear into the enveloping mist, and it was not long before the reason for this was known. Already the departure of the transport had been delayed by reports of submarine activity, and now, only a few miles out from Dover, she came upon the cruiser *Hermes* torpedoed by a submarine. Only a few minutes had passed since the explosion, but already she was sinking slowly into the tumbling waters. As the transport drew in towards her, many of the crew could be seen struggling in the waves. The boats were at once lowered; some of the Unit helped to man them, others set to work bringing up medical stores from the hold and preparing the cabins and saloons to receive the rescued. Before long the victims were being brought on board, some wounded by the explosion, others half-drowned in the bitterly cold water. One member jumped overboard to rescue a drowning sailor who floated near the transport. There was work for all; to pull up the rescued on to the decks, to find blankets and hot drinks for them, to dress those who were wounded, to restore to life the apparently drowned. Meanwhile the *Hermes* was settling down, and at last took the final plunge; the waters closed over her, and that was the end of one of the most tragic sights a man can see, the sudden swallowing up of a great ship, without resistance, almost within sight of land, and all in silence. There was no more to be done on the spot now, and the transport turned back to Dover to land the survivors. Though men worked for a long time on artificial respiration, there were several dead to carry ashore at the quayside, medical aid having been of no avail.

The party had had their first glimpse of war earlier than they expected, and as the transport headed out from Dover again that afternoon they might well wonder how soon adventure would meet them again. The crossing this time, however, was uneventful, and in the evening they reached Dunkirk safely. As the ship drew in past the pierheads and the high lighthouse that they were later to know as a familiar landmark, the sea was perfectly calm, reflecting the dull red glow of the autumn sunset. At first sight there was little enough here to show that at last the party had entered the zone of war. Only from the distance there came from time to time the roar of a heavy gun, one of the British monitors bombarding the coast. But after their experience during that crowded day, the members of the Unit hardly needed a reminder that the war was now near at hand. Permission was given to the party to sleep on board that night, as it was now getting late and they had as yet no quarters to go to on landing. But just as they were settling down for a good night's rest, news suddenly arrived of an urgent call for their help close by. It appeared that many thousands of French wounded had been pouring into the evacuation sheds at Dunkirk railway station far more quickly than they could be passed through to hospitals farther back. They were coming in from the Yser front, where the fighting had been prolonged and intense, and the machinery for

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evacuating casualties had not been able to keep pace with the overwhelming rush. At that moment there were not less than three thousand wounded men lying in the goods sheds at the station, with only half-a-dozen men to attend to them. It was not long before the party's cases of medical stores were sorted out in the light of lamps, and the newly-arrived men were making their way along the dark quayside to the station.

When they reached there, a terrible sight met their eyes. In the half-darkness of these bare sheds lay hundreds upon hundreds of wounded men stretched on the straw-covered floor—Frenchmen, Belgians, here and there a few British and Germans. They had been there, many of them, for three full days and nights, practically untended, mostly even unfed, the living, the dying, and the dead side by side, long rows of figures in every attitude of slow suffering or acute pain, of utter fatigue or dulled apathy, of appeal or despair. Out of the cool night air one passed through these high doors into an atmosphere that was insufferably revolting. It required a great effort of will to face the sight and stench of the countless gangrenous limbs that lay there helpless among the foul straw. This was a grim introduction to the Unit's work. None who were there can ever forget the horror and the hopelessness of that sight.

Even fifty men could hardly make headway in face of such a mass of work, but they had to do what they could. Food and drinks were distributed widely, and numbers of the worst cases were dressed. All through that first night the men were working incessantly, but fortunately the arrival next day of hospital ships sent to Dunkirk by the British Admiralty eased the pressure considerably. The Unit's orderlies had strenuous hours of stretcher-bearing between the sheds and the ships during these first days. At the same time the official medical service at the evacuation sheds was reinforced, and the volume of work soon began to subside. For three weeks, however, the assistance of the Unit was continued at the sheds, the work being organised into regular shifts of duty. After that the stream of casualties sank to a manageable level, outside help became no longer necessary to the French authorities, and the Unit thereupon withdrew to put their hand to some other task. But fortune had brought them to Dunkirk at an opportune moment, and they had made good their claim to be ready for any work that might need doing. They had already treated about 3,000 wounded and carried some 6,000 on board the ships which were to take them on their way to the hospitals of the interior.

Meanwhile other developments had been shaping. Within a few days of landing the Unit had set up its Headquarters in the Hotel du Kursaal, at Malo-les-Bains, a seaside suburb of Dunkirk lying about a mile from the centre of the town. Here the office of the Unit was established, and here too the men working at the sheds came back to have their meals or to sleep between their spells of duty. Close by the small fleet of ambulances was parked and the stores were housed. The connexion of the Unit with Malo thus begun was to continue throughout the war, and from this centre its first activities in the field now began to branch out. The work at the Dunkirk sheds would obviously only be of a temporary nature, whatever its value during these days of

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extraordinary pressure, and even while it was still in active progress tentative efforts were made to find openings for the Unit's services nearer the fighting-line. A few more men had joined the original party in France, and when the dressing work began to ease off, the Unit had altogether a fair number at its disposal. The problem was to find the most valuable means of employing them. The Belgians, to whom the Unit was originally accredited, had by now completely withdrawn their Army from the line and had no need of medical aid. But it seemed probable that such services as the Unit could afford might be acceptable to the French divisions holding the front round Ypres, and, on the advice of the Belgian authorities, the Unit turned its search in that direction.

In the later days of settled routine-like warfare it seemed ludicrous to picture the Unit setting out, almost in knight-errant fashion, to look for work wherever it thought such might be found. But these were days of crowded and unforeseen happenings. The stream of events had not yet been diverted into " regular channels," and quick initiative was called for more often than a formulated programme. Even so early as this the Unit had adopted—almost, one might say, as a motto—one guiding principle : " Find work that wants doing; take it; regularise it later, if you can." Rough and ready it may have been, but for these times of vicissitude there could hardly have been a better.

A small party went up on an ambulance car to Ypres to reconnoitre in the first days of November, but on that visit they found no immediate prospect of work opening up there. The old city was still untouched, her quiet beauty undisturbed even by the furious battle which was raging almost within sight of her ramparts. The famous Cloth Hall still held its towers inviolate above the open space of the Grand' Place, the wide streets were busy with the coming and going of soldiers and townsfolk. Among the inhabitants there was a feeling of confidence in the safety of their town, and the prospecting party returned to their Headquarters with little to report.

But before long a second expedition was made to Ypres. On November 9th a party of about a dozen set off to establish some centre from which ambulance work could be opened out in the Ypres district. It was a memorable run for the small convoy of three cars. Most of its drivers were running for the first time along the *pavé* roads, bordered on each side by deep mud, thronged with guns and limbers, lorries and waggons, and the infantry and cavalry of two armies. At numerous points they would be held up to satisfy the suspicious scrutiny of sentries. On a first venture it was a harassing task to make one's way along the unfamiliar roads of the zone of the armies, now held up in the entanglements of a traffic block, now steering one's car precariously along the edge of the *pavé* within an inch or two of the morass of clinging mud at the side. They drove up through Bergues (for the shorter cross-country route by Teteghem had not been discovered by then), past the fort at Maison Blanche, to the Headquarters of the French Eighth Army at Rousbrugge, and so on to Poperinghe. There the roads through the town were badly congested, and for a full hour they were halted in front of the Collège St. Stanislaus, while they

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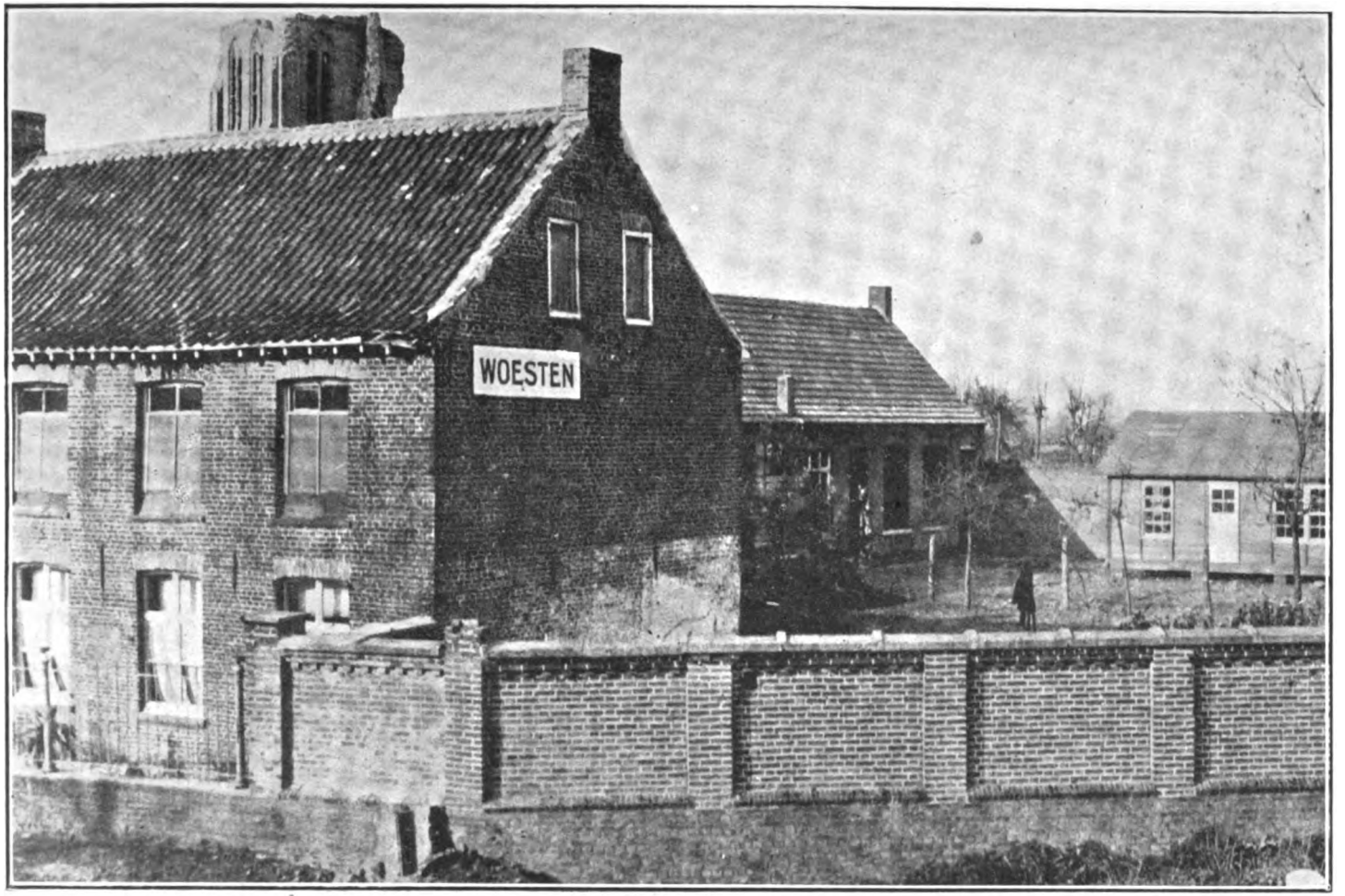

Plate III
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WOESTEN.

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watched in the falling darkness the novel sight of gun flashes reflected in the lowering clouds, and the unending columns of French cavalry passing down the Reninghelst road across the beams of their headlamps.

In the end Ypres was reached, but only to be found deserted, the streets littered with glass and the débris of fallen buildings, here and there a shell-hole pitting the roadway, and a spasmodic bombardment going on. The cars crept without lights up to the building it had been intended the party should occupy, but it was found empty and deserted. In the cellars of an abandoned convent they spent the night, making a rapid search through the town the next morning without result. There seemed to be nothing for it but to return again to their base for the present.

They drove out that morning along the Furnes road, running parallel with the line to the north of Ypres. Passing on their way through the small village of Woesten they discovered that it was the site of the medical headquarters of a French division (87th Territorial) occupying that sector. Here was one more opening to be explored. The services of the Unit were offered forthwith to the medical staff and were readily accepted on the spot. They had made a fortunate move this time. They were given a warm welcome and billets were allocated to them in the upper room of a convent school, the ground floor of which, converted into improvised wards, was already partly filled with wounded. At once word was sent down to Malo to send up additional ambulances and men, and work was started in earnest. The ambulances worked up to the aid posts close to the front line by day and night, sometimes when all was quiet on the sector, sometimes when heavy shelling of the roads was going on. It was really the sort of work for which the men had prepared themselves, and they counted themselves lucky thus to have stumbled upon it. It may be said without undue pride that the French authorities concerned were favourably impressed with the energy and reliability of their unofficial helpers, for before long no fewer than seven similar small stations were working in the Ypres region. But of this work, its nature and development, there will be more to say in the later chapter dealing with the French convoys, which may be said to have grown out of the almost accidental beginning at Woesten.

Shortly after this station was established—we may note in passing—the Unit adopted the title by which henceforward it was known. Since it was clear that the Unit's future activities were not likely to be directly concerned with the Belgian Army, it was decided to drop its original designation in favour of the more appropriate one by which it had already become generally known at Dunkirk—the "Friends' Ambulance Unit."

Meanwhile the progress of the Woesten station was leading to another large development in the Unit's work, the undertaking of measures of civilian relief, which will be described at some length in our next chapter. But here it is worth observing how this important side of the Unit's earlier work sprang also from the small beginnings of Woesten. It was in Ypres itself that the Unit was first brought into touch with the mass of civilian suffering which had

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resulted from the settling down of the fighting line in this thickly-populated corner of Belgium. The work of the ambulance cars centred at Woesten frequently took them into Ypres, only about five miles away, and from time to time in the billet at the school one could hear the German " heavies " falling in the town. On one occasion, after an exceptionally severe period of shelling, a car went into Ypres to see what the actual state of affairs was. But there was little to be seen. It seemed a city of the dead, with not a soul about the half-wrecked streets except an occasional passing soldier. The men were about to make their way out of the town again, believing that it no longer had any inhabitants, when they fell in with a R.A.M.C. straggler, always to be known later as " Frederick." How he came to be informed as to the population of the town, no one exactly knows, but from " Frederick " the men learned that there were numerous civilians still clinging to their homes, living underground in the cellars of their houses. It turned out to be only too true. There were, indeed, hundreds of families existing in these lamentable conditions, hardly daring to come above ground for days on end, living one could scarcely say how. What was even worse was that among these folk were many hundreds of wounded and sick persons sheltering in these dark and damp cellars, where not only they had little chance of recovery but were spreading infection among the remainder. None of these unfortunates was receiving skilled medical treatment, although the Abbé Delaere, the Curé of St. Pierre at Ypres, remained doggedly among his people, working night and day to relieve their sufferings, heeding neither hardship nor danger as he moved about the stricken town.

Once the situation had been revealed it was plain that a very valuable field for the Unit's services was opened up. At once it was arranged that a small party of doctors and dressers should go out from Woesten to Ypres each day, and for some time the patients were tended where they lay in their subterranean shelters. But this could only touch the fringe of the problem, and it was soon decided to set up a hospital in some comparatively safe part of the town where adequate medical and surgical treatment could be given to the surviving *Yprois*. As will be told in the following chapter, this plan was carried out, and the Unit's hospital at the Sacré Cœur remained open from December 1st till the final destruction of the city in the following April, when the whole population was at last evacuated.

In the meantime, apart from this dual development of the small outstation at Woesten, the Unit was branching out with fresh activities elsewhere. At Dunkirk negotiations had been going forward with the authorities of the French *Service de Santé* with a view to establishing a military hospital. Just at this time the need for auxiliary hospitals with the French Army was very great. Already at Malo itself there were several such running under the direction of various Red Cross organisations, and the Unit's offer to provide another was accepted. In this undertaking the Unit was greatly helped by the generosity of the Hon. Mrs. Frederick Guest, who supplied the necessary beds and surgical equipment, thus enabling the Villa St. Pierre, on the sea front at Malo, to be opened as a hospital by November 24th. On the previous day the first party

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of the Unit's nurses, eight in number, came over to France to take up duty in the new hospital.

Within a month of its landing the Unit could point to some measure of accomplishment to justify its existence. In numbers it had increased to about seventy in all; its work was expanding even more rapidly. On October 31st the original party had come ashore at Dunkirk without even any place to spend the night. On December 1st they had to their credit two hospitals open, a number of small but fully-occupied ambulance stations at the front, and an organised headquarters of administration and supply. The Friends' Ambulance Unit was, in fact, becoming a recognised institution.

Throughout the first winter of the war, the work of the Unit progressed steadily along the lines thus laid down. The great typhoid epidemic in the Ypres district led to the opening of another civilian hospital at Poperinghe, and later to that of the Queen Alexandra Hospital for French soldiers at Malo. General civilian relief came to be one of the Unit's most important functions during these months. The unofficial motor ambulance work already going on was regularised by the formation of two French convoys, at first in conjunction with the Hon. Lionel Holland's ambulances. In fact the Unit's organisation was becoming too complex for us to follow it as a whole, and it will be necessary to describe each branch of its work separately in the chapters which follow.

But it is perhaps worth while to emphasise the general conditions which prevailed during these early months. Looked at as a whole they were a testing time for the Unit. To have failed in these first efforts would have been to bring the experiment to an inconclusive end. In order to maintain its position the Unit had to satisfy outside scrutiny from two sides. On the one hand, the Unit, although in no way officially an organisation of the Society of Friends, had the support of the great majority of the Society's members, as well as of many others not directly connected with that body; and it was only natural that Friends should watch with a very real interest the progress of the Unit which bore their name. Their support, moral as well as material, was continued from the first days right on to the end of the war, and there could have been few better tests of the value of the work thus begun. On the other hand, the Unit had to gain the confidence of the many military authorities abroad with whom it naturally came into touch. It had to rely on the enterprise of its leaders and the loyal service of its members to make a favourable impression on a host of officials, great and small, before whose eyes the Unit's work was carried on. Otherwise its chances of survival in the zone of the armies were small indeed.

When one looked back at a later date to the first months of the Unit's life, they seemed to be invested with a glamour which faded as work became more stabilised. Certainly they formed the nucleus for a great body of tradition and legend in the more intimate history of the Unit. Ypres was long a name to conjure with, and the well-trod paths of reminiscence seemed always to lead to Woesten. Partly, of course, this flavour of romance could be traced to the mere novelty of the war. In 1914 one could take a lively interest in the

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commonest details of the daily round in war's unfamiliar setting. Partly it came from the excitement and even danger of much of the work; though neither of these was lacking in later days as well. But what chiefly marked these early stages was the uncertainty each day of what the next would bring. Stations were opened up at the shortest notice; cars moved from one to another to meet varying demands; a man working one morning in the office at Malo might be up with the ambulances next day at some exposed aid-post near Ypres. There was movement and unceasing variety about the Unit's work, and no months of weary waiting or dull routine. Often, too, one's ingenuity would be taxed to contrive some improvisation to meet unexpected needs. A story comes to mind of the early days of the motor ambulance convoy work, when the Unit was acting on the rather risky principle that it could not afford to refuse any work offered to it. A certain ambulance service had been duly undertaken for the French, but such was the scarcity of cars and drivers that it had to be done with only half the number considered necessary. All goes well until one fine day trouble looms up when it is announced that General So-and-So will inspect the English convoy which is working for his division. But this news does not daunt the Unit's expert diplomats. It is tactfully arranged that he shall inspect the convoy in the two villages from which its cars are working, half at a time: in this way, *mon Général*, there can be no interruption of the whole service. . . . Accordingly the cars are carefully aligned at the first village, and then—enter the General, who gravely inspects them and expresses his satisfaction in moving terms. Exit the General *en route* for the second village. But exit also, by a shorter way, the cars, arriving in time to line up again for a second inspection!

Fortunately it was not necessary to resort to such Gilbertian devices every day, but the tale may serve to illustrate the atmosphere of these times, when the Unit had to hold on until it could establish itself with ample reserves of men and cars.

And yet the very smallness of the Unit during the early days had its advantages as well as its difficulties. It was still a compact body then, its members bound in a closer intimacy of common spirit and common experience than was possible in the later days of scattered sections. There certainly was a spirit of *camaraderie* that could not soon be forgotten by those who enjoyed it. It would be quite wrong to suppose that this element in the Unit's life was lacking as time went on; if it had been, the Unit would soon have broken up. But it showed itself rather within the separate sections, as in the convoys, trains, or ships. That was only natural in the changed circumstances, but many old members looked back regretfully to these days when, as they would say, "everyone knew everyone else." Some would become almost tearful when they recalled life at Woesten, in that upstairs room with its well-fed stove and famous acetylene lamp, or the stirring days of Ypres with their abundant variety of work and adventure. But the various sections whose work we turn to describe in the following chapters were far from lacking the inspiration which carried the Unit successfully through its opening phases.

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CHAPTER II

THE CIVILIAN HOSPITALS AND RELIEF WORK.

THE Civilian Relief work of the Friends' Ambulance Unit extended without interruption, although not without fluctuations, from November, 1914, to February, 1919. For the most part it was carried out among the Belgian population who remained in the southern portion of that narrow strip of their territory which was left uninvaded, and thus lay within the area occupied by the British Second Army. Anyone familiar with the conditions of the war-zone will realise how important was the attitude of the military authorities concerned towards such work, if the facilities necessary to perform it were to be obtained; at all times, as we shall see, the Unit owed much to the co-operation and encouragement of the medical authorities of the Second Army. Looking over the work as a whole, it presents two periods of great activity. The first, lasting from December, 1914, to May, 1915, was due in part to the typhoid epidemic in the Ypres district, in part to the casualties and distress caused by the weeks of fierce fighting which culminated in the Second Battle of Ypres. The second period began with the German advance towards Hazebrouck in April, 1918, with all its disastrous effects on that corner of France, and went on till the end of the year, the events of the Allied advance to the Scheldt opening out much new work.

Between these two seasons of activity there were times when the continuity of the Unit's civilian work came near to being broken. When the first winter of the war had passed and the Western front settled down to stationary warfare, the civilian population remaining in the zone behind the battle-line began to adapt itself to a changed mode of life. For those civilians who held to their homes in the midst of the campaigning armies, life had still some abnormal difficulties. In a sense they found themselves overshadowed by these great military organisations which took possession of their towns and countryside. But generally speaking, so long as stationary warfare ruled the military situation, the life of the population of the army zones went forward in a surprisingly normal course. It was only natural therefore that, except in a few directions where the need was always present, relief work should be at a low ebb for a long period. But in 1918 open warfare once more swept backwards and forwards across Flanders; the workaday life of the civil population was harshly dislocated, and distress of all kinds scarcely less widespread than in the worst days of 1914. During these months civilian work resumed its place as one of the Unit's chief activities.

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It will be advisable, then, to give in this chapter, first a description of the Unit's early work among civilians, then some account of the "Search Party," which continued in the field throughout the intermediate period, and finally the story of the newer sections called into being by the eventful months of 1918.

Note on the Aide Civile Belge.

It will be convenient to give here a short explanation of the relationship of the Unit with certain Belgian workers from the spring of 1915 down to May 5th, 1916. The Unit's civilian work, which started in Ypres towards the end of 1914, as it expanded brought it into touch with two Belgian ladies who were also organising relief in Flanders. These ladies were the Countess van den Steen de Jehay, who had been connected with the St. Camille School for Nurses in Brussels, and the Countess Louise d'Ursel, Lady-in-Waiting to H.M. the Queen of the Belgians. The starting of the Hospital Elisabeth at Poperinghe in the first weeks of 1915 brought the two organisations into a close connection, as will be seen from the account of that institution. In order to effect co-ordination the Aide Civile Belge was formed in May, 1915, on the Committee of which both organisations were represented. This Committee consisted originally of the Countesses van den Steen de Jehay and d'Ursel, the Abbé Delaere (Curé of St. Pierre at Ypres), the Officer Commanding the F.A.U., Geoffrey Young, Dr. T. T. Thomson, with William Mordey as Secretary.

By the spring of 1916 it was becoming evident to those members of the Friends' Ambulance Unit who were serving on the Committee of the Aide Civile Belge, that a great deal of the ground had been adequately covered. The emergency work was practically completed, and the likelihood of similar services being required was remote. Most of the other work, once having gained a firm footing, could best be carried on by the Belgians themselves rather than by a foreign Red Cross body, and especially in the case of activities likely to continue after the war, such as the orphanages. In view of these considerations, as well as of the increasing difficulties of administration which arose, the Friends' Ambulance Unit decided to withdraw, and on May 5th, 1916, all books were handed over to a new Belgian Committee under whose direction the work was carried on. With the revival of civilian work nearly two years later, the organisation of the Unit's sections and those of the Aide Civile Belge remained distinct.

The Sacré Cœur Hospital, Ypres.

For most of the inhabitants of the uninvaded Belgian territory the early winter of 1914-15 was a period of acute distress. In addition to the hard exigencies of war came the disorganisation of the ordinary civil administration, and this combination of circumstances produced, in what was one of the most densely-populated areas in Europe, a degree of misery more severe than can generally have been realised. In time of war most men's eyes are too closely

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fixed on the military foreground of the picture for them to appreciate the darkness of the civilian background. With the medical aspects of the situation the Friends' Ambulance Unit soon came into touch. About the middle of November, 1914, a section of its ambulance cars was stationed at Woesten, working on the evacuation of the regimental aid-posts of the French corps which then held the Yser canal. The movements of this party brought them frequently into the town of Ypres, where the urgent need of civilian relief was crying out on every hand.

The hospital accommodation for this region—the southern half of unoccupied Belgium—would seem to have consisted in normal times of only two institutions where medical and surgical treatment were available, one at Ypres, and the other at Poperinghe. The hospital at the former town, a prominent landmark at the east end of the Grand' Place, had been hit during the first bombardment and then evacuated, with the result that only the hospital at Poperinghe, with a capacity of about fifty beds, was left to serve the whole of the district. Since the autumn the normal population of this part had been increased by the large numbers of refugee families swept back from the invaded and exposed villages to the east of Ypres and the Ypres-Dixmude canal. The state of affairs in the town itself called for instant medical assistance. Considerable numbers of inhabitants were being wounded in and around Ypres every day, and at the same time illness, aided by the overcrowded and ill-nourished condition of these people, was rapidly spreading.

On December 1st, accordingly, overtures were made with a view to obtaining permission to establish a hospital in the town. The Burgomaster himself was not then resident in Ypres, but the Curé of St. Pierre, who was looked to as the leading citizen left, gladly gave his sympathy and co-operation to the scheme. The name of the Abbé Delaere should be remembered by long generations of the people of Ypres as one of their city's noblest citizens in those days of trial; no man did more to relieve the suffering in that unhappy town than this gallant priest.

The building chosen for the hospital was the Hospice du Sacré Cœur, built about 1911 as the District Lunatic Asylum for females. Its accommodation was very extensive, the wards large and airy, and the fact that most of the Asylum stores were still intact made the task of preparing the place for the reception of patients an easier one than it might otherwise have been. The only real drawback to the Hospice was its poor water supply, but this defect it shared with every building in the city. Its situation on the Poperinghe road, about 300 yards beyond the railway crossing, was convenient, though later events showed that its proximity to the railway and the main highway into Ypres made it unfortunately exposed to enemy bombardment.

On December 2nd some thirty civilians, sick, wounded, and infirm, were placed in the Hospice. For a week the hospital, under the care of four Sisters of the Ypres Civil Hospital, was visited daily by the doctor in charge of the Woesten Station, with a party of dressers and orderlies, who returned to their centre of work in the evening, leaving only two men behind for night duty.

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The expansion of work soon made this arrangement impracticable and on the 9th the doctor and his orderly staff installed themselves at the Sacré Cœur. They were joined by a number of the Sisters of the Ypres Hospital, who had taken refuge in Poperinghe at the time of the first bombardment, but now volunteered to return to work at the Sacré Cœur when the needs of their townsfolk were explained to them by the Abbé Delaere. They themselves would ask for no eulogy of their services, but it must be said that never did members of a Sisterhood fulfil their vows of service more courageously or devotedly than these.

About the middle of December the first cases of enteric were brought in from the district. The absence of facilities for bacteriological examination left the nature of these cases uncertain at first, but when their diagnosis was confirmed it was seen that much work in this direction was sure to open out. The difficulties of nursing typhoid in such surroundings may be easily imagined, especially as cases were often not brought in until the second or even third week of disease.

The hospital had, however, to face greater difficulties by reason of its exposed position. When the arrangements were still in a rudimentary stage, on December 20th, the Sacré Cœur Hospital was severely shelled by German artillery, after an aerial reconnaissance in the morning; about ten heavy shells hit the building direct, and a considerable number fell close by. Before the shelling had ceased all the patients, over thirty in number, were safely lodged in the cellars, but such accommodation could obviously be only temporary; it offered safety, but not health. Next day the enemy batteries opened fire again on the Sacré Cœur, and the question of evacuating the patients became acute. Fortunately, it proved possible immediately to arrange their transference to the "Ambulance de l'Océan," a Belgian Army Hospital at La Panne, which agreed to receive as many as were fit to stand the journey. Accordingly, all but six were sent off the same evening, valuable assistance in transport being given by the Munro Ambulance Corps. The patients left were meantime transferred to the Male Asylum in the town, and a doctor, two dressers, and three sisters left in charge.

On December 26th, the artillery activity had so much calmed down that patients and staff were able to return to the Sacré Cœur. The work there at once resumed its former proportions, and by the beginning of February had greatly increased in extent. The heavy bombardments of December brought a corresponding influx of wounded civilians, and it was soon only too clear that a typhoid epidemic was spreading in the town and surrounding villages. Henceforward the hospital had to make provision for a large and increasing number of sick, as well as continuing the care of the wounded. When the hospital re-opened after Christmas it held six patients, by the first week of February, 120. Four wards in all were opened, two for each sex, one of which was reserved for typhoid cases, the other for wounded and such few non-infectious sick as there were.

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Plate IV
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SACRE CŒUR HOSPITAL, YPRES.

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The question of evacuating the patients when cured or convalescent was not an easy one; many patients had no homes to which they could return, and even if they had, return would as often as not mean a cellar existence and fresh exposure to bombardment or disease. During the first fortnight of the hospital's existence, accommodation for those fit to be moved was found in the Anglo-Belgian Hospital at Furnes, but after December 16th this was no longer available. The emergency evacuation on December 21st was effected, as described above, to La Panne. The third and most important reservoir for discharged patients was the British Army hospital at Malassise, near St. Omer. The first evacuation to this institution, which had been set aside for the purpose of relieving the pressure of typhoid cases on the Ypres and Poperinghe hospitals, took place on February 7th, when 70 cases were transferred. Fresh cases soon filled the Sacré Cœur wards again, and regular evacuations to Malassise formed the usual outlet for the hospital until its closing.

By the middle of March the severity of the typhoid epidemic was perceptibly waning. Two circumstances in particular, however, rendered the work of stamping out the disease one of extreme difficulty. Firstly, during the period November, 1914—January, 1915, upwards of ten thousand people had streamed back into the town and neighbourhood of Ypres, and had thronged an area where bombardment was rapidly destroying such sanitation as existed. Secondly, there was found by everyone who had to deal with these people, an enormous difficulty in inducing them to leave their homes for safer surroundings. Hundreds of Belgian families preferred the dank security of a cellar to the dreaded possibility of having to cross the border line into France. This pathetic though stubborn determination to stand by their homes, no matter what might happen, must have cost hundreds of lives, young and old, in that corner of Belgium alone. The epidemic, however, gradually died out, though it was certainly only by thorough treatment and careful precautionary measures that it failed to reach even more alarming proportions than it did.

Of the internal history of the Sacré Cœur Hospital until its final evacuation there is little to tell, but mention should be made of some of the difficulties under which its staff laboured. During some of the busiest days its personnel was composed only of one doctor, two dressers, seven orderlies and four sisters, a total of fourteen. In the event of major operations, or any sudden emergency, one or two of the out-patient doctors were usually available, and the kitchen and motor staffs were additional to these figures. But it is none the less plain that the personnel was not numerically strong enough for the convenient care of fully 100 patients, of whom half would be wounded, except by dint of constant overwork and long hours. The nominal working hours of the orderlies were twelve, but more often than not they were called on for additional duties, either in the hospital or in the out-patient work described later.

The district served by the hospital was never more than local. The sick and wounded under treatment came almost entirely from the town of Ypres

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itself and the neighbouring villages of Dickebusch, Kruisstraat, Wieltje, Potyze, St. Jean, St. Julien, Brielen, and Boesinghe. Small though this area may seem, its population at that time, living under the worst conditions, cannot have numbered less than 20,000.

Until the opening of the Second Battle of Ypres in April, work at the Sacré Cœur continued steadily. But the increasing severity of the bombardments at that time made the further existence of the hospital virtually an impossibility, and although the end came suddenly it was not unexpected. On Tuesday night, April 20th, Ypres was heavily bombarded, and as the night wore on the ultimate fate of the city became all too clear. That night an evacuation was made of all patients fit to travel, and 60 cases were sent away, the typhoids to Poperinghe, the wounded to La Panne. The next day, however, it was decided to try to keep the hospital open, for a vast amount of emergency work had arisen with which there was really no one else to deal save the staff of the Sacré Cœur. Outwardly, things seemed more tranquil by Wednesday. There was a general impression in the city that the worst was over, and it was even harder than usual to induce patients to consent to their evacuation, whether from the hospital itself, or from the cellars of the town. But on the afternoon of Thursday, the 22nd, their hopes of further immunity were shattered by the commencement of another intense bombardment. The staff were fully engaged in collecting, dressing, and evacuating wounded civilians, and many soldiers wounded in their billets were also taken to places of safety. About 11 o'clock that night news came from the R.A.M.C. Field Ambulance stationed at the other end of the Sacré Cœur building, that, in view of the place being possibly cut off by a German advance, they had received instructions to withdraw to Poperinghe. Since such a grave view of the position was held by the Army authorities, it was resolved to evacuate all remaining inmates, including a number of refugees, old people and children. This was started just before dawn, about four o'clock on the 23rd, and by six o'clock all the patients had been got away. During the two crowded hours the shelling continued, and immediately after the last cases had left, the building was struck by a direct hit.

So ended the Sacré Cœur Hospital proper, though a small dressing-station staff, consisting of two doctors and five orderlies, was left behind to carry on work in the cellars of the building. The Unit's first civilian hospital had thus had five months of a strenuous and often dangerous existence. From December 1st to April 17th it had admitted 230 surgical cases; from January 6th to April 17th, 477 cases of contagious illness, mostly typhoid; a total of 707 in all. When all the out-patient and visiting work is added, the whole story presents a notable picture of voluntary effort under exceedingly difficult conditions. It is not to be denied, nor is it surprising, that mistakes were made. The events of these months obliged constant adjustments to cope with new work, and the comparative inexperience of an overworked staff was only outweighed by their enthusiasm. But in the end there remained a wealth of work accomplished, valuable experience gained, and the gratitude of the citizens of Ypres.

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Château Elisabeth Hospital, Poperinghe.

Unlike the Sacré Cœur Hospital, this institution was started by definite invitation of the local authorities, and solely for the purpose of dealing with the typhoid epidemic of January, 1915. The resources of the Poperinghe Civil Hospital being not nearly sufficient to deal with the number of typhoid cases reported by the second week of January, and the Ypres Hospital being already severely taxed to meet the needs of its own district, a small local Committee was formed in Poperinghe with M. van Merris, the Bourgmestre, at its head, to provide additional hospital accommodation in this emergency. This body itself was able to do little beyond requisitioning the Château Dhout, a conspicuous and roomy building on the Reninghelst road. But remembering the similar circumstances at Ypres, the Committee was not slow to approach the Friends' Ambulance Unit for assistance in launching their schemes. This help was at once forthcoming and doctors, secretary, dispenser, and orderlies, together with ambulances and drivers, were provided towards the staffing of the proposed hospital. The Unit also gave facilities for the purchase of stores, and made considerable contributions towards its equipment. At the same time the Poperinghe Committee had approached the Belgian Minister of the Interior with a view to obtaining the requisite number of nurses, and the Countess van den Steen, who had been closely associated with the St. Camille School of Nursing at Brussels, together with the Countess Louise d'Ursel, were appointed to take charge of that side of the hospital.

The building, renamed the Château Elisabeth, by gracious permission of H.M. the Queen of the Belgians, was taken over by the F.A.U. on January 14th, 1915. Its full staff was composed as under :—

Male Staff :			
Doctors	2		
Secretary	1		
Dispenser	1		
Orderlies	6		
Motor Drivers (with 5 F.A.U. cars)	5		
Resident Chaplain	1		
	16		
Nursing Staff :			
Nurses from S. Camille School, Brussels		11	
Belgian Army Nursing Nuns ..		4	
Nuns from Dixmude & Ypres		18	
English Sisters & V.A.D's under Madame O'Gorman		8	
			41
House Work and Laundry :			
Nuns from S. Joseph, Ypres	5		
Nuns from Staden ..	4		
		9	
			50
Total ..	66		

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A nursing staff bearing so high a ratio as 41 to 140 patients may seem at first sight almost excessive, but there were circumstances to justify this large figure. Ordinary ward work was made heavier than it should have been by reason of the unsatisfactory arrangement of the Château for hospital work. Moreover, a considerable number of these nurses were only half-trained; few had much experience of hospital nursing, and fewer still had the practised skill demanded in typhoid nursing. Nevertheless, all without exception worked faithfully and cheerfully, and certainly these homeless refugee nuns from Ypres and Dixmude brought a devotion and sympathy to their refugee patients which did much to balance any technical shortcomings.

The duties of the male orderly staff were mainly the hospital sanitary work, the disinfection of clothing and bedding, ward work with the M.O's, such as dressings and injections, and the general care and cleaning of the buildings. Their day was fully occupied and what little opportunity they had for fresh air and exercise was usually found in acting as stretcher-bearers on the ambulances sent out to collect patients. The resident Belgian priest, in addition to his daily ministrations, carried out the varied duties of interpreting—most of the patients were Flemish-speaking—arranging burials and notifying deaths to the civil authorities and to relatives.

The conversion of the Château into a hospital ready to receive patients meant its complete equipment, from beds and bedding down to the smallest details, and everything pressed for the speedy completion of this work. The building was taken over by the F.A.U. on January 14th and the first patients were admitted on the 18th. In the interval a large quantity of equipment and stores had to be transported to Poperinghe and fitted up. The beds were brought from Ypres, where there existed several institutions, notably the prison, on whose furniture the Belgian authorities made requisition. Blankets and medical stores came from the Unit's headquarters at Dunkirk, and many miscellaneous articles were obtained from different quarters. In these three or four crowded days, however, everything necessary for starting work, except the nurses, was installed in the Château; and when the first batch of patients arrived the greater part of the hospital was ready to open.

But none the less there really remained much to be done, for within a few days the whole available accommodation was filled, and there was still a formidable waiting-list of patients to be admitted. It was accordingly decided to convert two long potting-sheds in the garden into wards. This improvisation was speedily completed, and on February 7th the two wards were filled with 30 fresh patients. A second and more ambitious step in expansion was at once put in hand, and by March 10th, three sheds which had formed the Ypres isolation hospital were removed from that town and re-erected by Belgian engineers in a field beside the Château. Two of them formed admirable wards, holding 30 beds each; the third was converted into an administration block, containing a staff kitchen, dining-room and four small bedrooms.

Meanwhile other miscellaneous works of alteration and adjustment were being carried out in the Château and its grounds. The chief of these were the

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erection of a large excreta boiler, and several smaller ones for disinfecting purposes; the installation of a properly-equipped laundry, with the requisite water supply and drying accommodation; and the fitting-up of stoves for the whole building. Much of this work presented considerable difficulties, particularly the provision of a water supply for the laundry, and delay occurred through the fact that parts of the plant had to be brought from England, but the results fully justified all the trouble and expense.

Although the first intention of the hospital was that it should provide for only the town and commune of Poperinghe, not many days passed before it became clear that a very much larger area could be usefully served, and the zone of activity soon reached from Furnes in the north to Kemmel in the south. It was an extensive district, and in the existing circumstances, with fever raging in these crowded villages, the problem of how best to cope with the flow of applicants for admission was a very serious one. The most desirable system was to have a certificate from either a local or a military doctor, stating the name, sex, and full address of the sick person recommended for admission, which could then be brought to the Château, and the patient collected by ambulance as soon as possible. When the hospital was full, names would be placed on a waiting list for admission by simple rotation, which though often meaning a dangerous delay, was really the only fair method of reconciling a limited accommodation with an almost unlimited demand. In practice, however, the regularity of admission by order on the list was sadly broken by the frequent arrival of patients at the Château gates, brought thither on carts or gigs by anxious relatives. Such cases, often brought from a distance, could not properly be sent home again, and had to be admitted, but the habit was very unfair to those who had applied days before through more regular channels. In the same way, there would often come a request from a regimental M.O. for the immediate evacuation of an infectious case from his men's billets, and such demands likewise could not be refused.

The evacuation of patients presented the same difficulties as had arisen at the Sacré Cœur Hospital, but they likewise were solved by the British Army Hospital at Malassise. On February 7th, the first batch of patients was sent there from the Château, and it remained by far the largest outlet for the typhoid cases. Out of a total of 618 patients admitted as typhoid to the Château (January, 1915, to May, 1916), 85 died, 67 were discharged direct, and the remainder, 466 in all, were transferred to Malassise.*

These evacuations to a place situated on French soil raised over and over again the same prejudice and suspicion among the Flemish folk that had been so troublesome at Ypres. Amongst the patients themselves there was naturally great uneasiness at the prospect of leaving their own country to be nursed by foreigners ignorant of their native tongue. Frequently a rush of admissions to the Château meant evacuations to Malassise at very short notice, and relatives arriving on visiting-day would find their patient gone without their having received any

* See Appendix "A."

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warning. And in a few cases, it must be admitted, sick persons were induced to come into the hospital on the understanding that they would not be sent over the frontier, an undertaking which later it was imperative to ignore. Explanations as often as not were treated as heartless casuistry, and many stormy interviews fell to the lot of the hospital chaplain. As time went on, however, the accounts of their treatment by returning patients reassured their anxious friends, and the moral difficulties of these evacuations were appreciably lessened.

March and April were months of great pressure at the Château, although by then the actual typhoid epidemic was distinctly abating. But both from Poperinghe Civil Hospital and from the Sacré Cœur at Ypres, patients were transferred in considerable numbers, and when the former building was hit during a bombardment late in April, the Hospital Elisabeth remained the only civilian medical institution in the Ypres-Poperinghe region.

About this time the enemy shelling, which previously had been directed chiefly at the central parts of the town, began to threaten the safety of the Château. Conditions in Poperinghe itself made it necessary to find quarters for sisters, chauffeurs, and ambulances in and around the hospital itself, and this could only be done by filling the cellars and hiring an estaminet, the Parc St. Georges, some two hundred yards further from the town. But it was soon only too clear that the strain of the daily bombardments was adversely affecting many of the patients, and in view of the fact that many of these people were brought in from safe places, it seemed unjustifiable to keep any there who could be moved. It was accordingly decided to begin the evacuation of all the lighter cases to Malassise without delay. The clearing of the hospital started on April 24th and went on till completed on the 30th, the patients being sent away at all hours of the day or night just as cars became available. The irregularity of hours during that week was hard on the patients, and hard on the staff at Malassise, who more than once would have to receive a convoy in the small hours of the morning, but these inconveniences were quite unavoidable owing to difficulties of transport arising from the heavy fighting during those days.

A new chapter in the history of the Château opened with the first week of May, 1915. The closing days of April saw a great influx of wounded civilians to the hospital, brought in by F.A.U. cars stationed at the Unit's dressing station on the Ypres-Vlamertinghe road. To keep these cases long in the Château was impossible; over 70 were admitted between April 27th and May 6th, and at such a rate the hospital would have been overflowing in a few more days. At the same time forty wounded civilians from Ypres were treated in an annexe of the workhouse at Poperinghe and these likewise could not be kept there till cured. Arrangements were therefore made to clear these cases to the "Ambulance de l'Océan" at La Panne, and a certain number were distributed between Malassise and the Hospice at Hazebrouck.

The position of the hospital at this time was a very difficult one. Numerous wounded civilians were coming in from the Ypres area, from Vlamertinghe, and from Poperinghe itself. Typhoid, though not so prevalent as a couple of

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months before, had still to be reckoned with, and there was the usual quota of general sickness. The shelling of the town continued, but a conviction grew that the Château, though not altogether immune from danger, was at least in a fairly safe position for a hospital, and it was therefore decided to carry it on as a clearing station for all sorts of sick and wounded civilians, with the view of distributing them in quieter places as speedily as possible.

A certain amount of internal re-arrangement had accordingly to be made in the Château; one of the outside wards was maintained as a typhoid ward, from which patients were to be evacuated as soon as their blood examinations had been completed in the Army laboratories at Bailleul or Poperinghe. Two wards inside the house were reserved for ordinary sick and wounded, one for male, the other for female patients; and accommodation was reserved for accouchements, and cases requiring isolation, in two small wards to hold three or four beds each. The small isolation room was in almost constant use for cases of diphtheria, which unfortunately often reached the hospital in an advanced and almost hopeless stage. There still remained a considerable amount of spare room in the Château, and at the end of May provision was made for the care of the casualties of the 7th Belgian Artillery, attached to the British Second Army. This work, however, was performed entirely by Belgian doctors and staff and does not, therefore, come within the scope of the Unit's history.

Meanwhile the question remained of what to do with patients who were likely to remain in hospital for long periods. The situation, while eminently suitable for a clearing hospital, made it inadvisable to add to the 35 beds already set aside for civilians. At the same time the evacuation of civilians to the "Ambulance de l'Océan," at La Panne, could only be an emergency measure, as this was a hospital intended only for Belgian soldiers. To meet the difficulty a hospital was established at Hazebrouck, which was ready for use on May 9th. Its site was later transferred to Watten.

During the summer of 1915, then, the Château continued to work steadily as a clearing hospital, keeping only the very lightest cases whose stay could not be more than a few days. There was a steady flow of wounded from the exposed districts, cases coming from as far as the Belgian suburbs of Armentières, and even, if the patients were of Belgian nationality, from that town itself. Typhoid, though now on the wane, was still present, and between May and September 70 cases were brought in. After this period arrangements were altered, and such few cases as occurred were taken direct to St. Iddesbalde Hospital, Coxyde, by the Belgian *Service de Santé*.

On August 22nd, however, the continued bombardments of the town, and particularly of the railway, raised once again the question of the wisdom of maintaining a civilian hospital on such a site, with shells frequently falling within a hundred yards, and occasionally in the garden itself. This time it was decided definitely to transfer the civilian patients to a safe position, and search was made for a suitable place. It was obviously desirable to keep at once within easy reach of Poperinghe and within the Belgian frontier, and so it was decided to

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re-erect the three sheds standing in the Château grounds in a field at the Ferme de Rycke, which was situated to the west of Poperinghe about a mile down the railway line. This was accordingly done, and they were supplemented by two others presented by H.M. the Queen of the Belgians. Until September 18th, when two of these sheds were ready for use, the work of the Château Elisabeth was carried on. Prudence, however, demanded that patients should be placed only in back rooms and evacuated at the earliest possible moment, with the result that usually the building did not contain more than half-a-dozen patients at one time.

There was accommodation at the "Farm," as the civilian annexe at the Ferme de Rycke came to be called, for 55 patients. The hospital, when completed, consisted of one male ward, one female ward and one smaller ward for lying-in cases; in addition there was a staff hut, containing the kitchen, dining room and sleeping accommodation, and a fifth one containing the nurses' quarters and a chapel. It was not thought necessary at the time of construction to make provision for infectious cases, since all such were then being taken by the Belgian authorities to the Saint Iddesbalde Hospital at Coxyde. In view of later events, however, this was a regrettable omission; the numerous cases of advanced diphtheria from the Locre district might have had a better chance of recovery had they been spared this 30-mile journey.

The work of the "Farm" continued regularly all through the autumn and winter. Its first batch of patients came from the female side of the Watten tent hospital, transferred back to Poperinghe on account of the approaching winter. The number of new cases per month kept steadily at about 50, of whom about one-third were wounded. The accidents among the Belgian labourers employed on military roads and railways, various sick, and accouchements accounted for the remainder. Generally speaking, patients admitted to the "Farm" were kept until cured, as there now remained only the Barge Hospital at Bergues (which succeeded the Watten Hospital) to which they might be evacuated, and its accommodation was limited to about 20 beds.

A number of domestic improvements were carried out in the opening months of 1916. The water supply was improved by joining up with the Army main from the Mont des Cats, water was laid on in all the huts, and a bathroom erected. The approach from the Abeele road across the railway line was put into a state of repair by the Army, and the "Farm" staff spent much of its spare time in laying out the garden and establishing a more efficient drainage for the field. Four well-constructed dug-outs were built by the Belgians, for protection against the not infrequent aerial attacks on the railway, but fortunately no need for using them arose after their completion. At the same time the medical resources of the "Farm" were being expanded, notably by the erection of two covered platforms for open-air treatment, one for men and one for women, and by the installation of an X-ray apparatus. With the exception of the laundry, which was still carried on at the Château, the "Farm" was by this time a self-contained hospital. The regular staff consisted of one resident

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Plate V
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THE CHATEAU ELISABETH, POPERINGHE.

Photo 1919

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M.O., one pharmacist, five orderlies, five nurses, and three nuns, with another doctor always available at the Château for operations.

The work of the " Farm " had a varied and often interesting character, and it was with no small regret that on May 5th, 1916, the F.A.U. surrendered its share in the working of the hospital to Belgian hands.

Hazebrouck, Watten and the Barge Hospitals.

We have seen in the account of the Château Elisabeth what were the circumstances leading up to the establishment of a civilian hospital at Hazebrouck. The pressure on the Poperinghe hospital at the beginning of May, 1915, made the provision of some outlet an urgent question, and a wide area was searched for a suitable place with little success. In the end, however, the first floor of the Musée at Hazebrouck was taken, and adapted to provide accommodation for 52 male and female patients and the required staff. The building was found in a sadly-neglected condition and a thorough cleaning out had to be made, as well as several constructional adjustments, but the place was ready and opened for its first patients on May 9th. The premises were compact, and not inconveniently arranged, but sanitary arrangements sufficient for hospital requirements were lacking; at times indeed, owing to the court-yard of the Musée being used as a clearing station for refugees, conditions became definitely unhealthy.

Throughout the early summer the hospital was carried on, but it was felt that every effort should be made meanwhile to find a more suitable site than the one it occupied. This was ultimately found at Watten, to which place on July 25th all the patients at the Musée were transferred.

The new site provided a delightfully situated and easily managed hospital, and a striking improvement after the difficulties at Hazebrouck. It consisted of four marquees and six small tents, pitched in a meadow on the bank of the St. Omer—Dunkirk canal, and a capacious barge, procured by Mdme. O'Gorman, and converted for hospital use, which was moored just opposite on the canal. Several rooms in an adjacent brewery were also hired, and all combined to form a very pleasant and efficient hospital of 52 beds. The female patients, staff quarters, and dining-room were under canvas in the field; the Barge " Notre Dame de Perpétuel Secours " held 22 male patients and its own nursing staff of four; and the rooms in the brewery were utilised as operating theatre, X-ray room, office, linen store, and nurses' sleeping quarters, with the kitchen in an outhouse.

The move proved to be very beneficial to the patients, who could not have had the same chances of fresh air and healthy surroundings at Hazebrouck, and a number of tubercular cases were benefited by the life under canvas. But it was obviously only a tenable site during the summer months, and with the approach of autumn came the question of another removal. It would not have been an easy problem to solve, had it not happened that just at the time when the weather was beginning to force a decision by flooding the field, the

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Ferme de Rycke annexe at Poperinghe was completed. Accordingly the female side of the Watten hospital was closed down and the patients from the tents transferred there on September 18th. The male patients remained on the barge, which, fitted up admirably as a self-contained little hospital, was quite able to shelter them throughout the coming winter.*

A few days later it was removed to another mooring more conveniently situated at Petit Millebrugge, near Bergues. Near that town it remained under the direction of Madame O'Gorman, with a few local changes of position, until the beginning of 1917, when the French authorities took over the barge for military cases, the Belgian civilian patients being transferred to other hospitals.

Civilian Out-Patient and Visiting Work.

The medical work which the Friends' Ambulance Unit was called upon to do in the unoccupied portion of Belgium down to the spring of 1916, did not end with the caring for the sick and wounded in those hospitals of which an account has just been given. The congestion of the villages, the dangers of life in the shelled areas, and the widespread illness and poverty among the inhabitants cried out for more relief than those institutions could provide. And when it is remembered that invasion and the needs of the army had practically denuded the district of civilian doctors to deal with the medical side of this catastrophe, it can readily be understood how great a scope there was for the help of the Unit's doctors and other workers among the homes of the people.

Although the earliest of the civilian out-patient work was carried on at Woesten in November, 1914, it will be well to follow first its more important side, which began in Ypres prior to the establishment of the Sacré Cœur Hospital. When the Unit's doctors first came up to that town at the close of November, they found most of the surviving inhabitants living in cellars, where they had taken shelter during the first bombardments, many of them ill, some wounded or injured, all of them existing under the most insanitary conditions and almost, if not entirely, without any medical resources. Some relief was given by a party coming down from the Woesten station, but about Christmas, an out-patients' station for Ypres itself was opened, at a central position in the town, in the Ste. Marie Convent (Rue de Lille). There medical aid and advice were given by the Unit's doctor at certain hours to all who came. During the rest of the day house-to-house visits were made by the same doctor, and patients unable to be removed to hospital were treated where they lay, though often in such surroundings as to make their chances of recovery very small. Much valuable aid in both sides of this work was given by the devoted nuns of the Ste. Marie Convent, and by the Curé of St. Pierre.

The out-patient dispensary and the visiting practice together formed a work of no mean proportions. During the first five weeks of its regular work, the Unit doctor had paid 600 visits to patients in their own dwellings, as well as carrying on the morning work at the Ste. Marie Convent. During these

*See Appendix "A."

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January days, the typhoid epidemic was assuming dangerous dimensions, and the discovery of many cases was due to the vigilance of the visiting doctor, who carried out a considerable number of anti-typhoid inoculations on these rounds. The numbers of out-patients and the scope of the visiting work expanded rapidly, as these activities became known to the inhabitants, but fortunately the Unit was able to cope with the demands made upon it. Early in February, 1915, a small touring car was lent by the Hon. Lionel Holland of the British Red Cross Society specially for the visiting rounds, which released for other purposes the ambulance that had hitherto been used. Throughout the stormy days of February and March the visiting doctor was on the roads early and late, accompanied by a sister of the Ste. Marie Convent as interpreter. All over the Ypres countryside his " Ford " was seen, traversing the roughest tracks, often exposed to the enemy's view, to some outlying farm. In the middle of February the visiting was divided from the out-patient dispensary at the Convent, as the amount of work of the two combined was becoming too much for one medical officer to undertake.

On these lines work was carried on until April 23rd, when the second great bombardment of Ypres and its neighbourhood began, causing the complete evacuation by civilians of the major part of the district served. But up to that date, about 2,700 visits had been paid to patients in their own dwellings, while out-patients at the Ste. Marie Convent numbered about 1,500, and those at the Sacré Cœur rather more than 300.

The evacuation of Ypres, however, did not mean the end of the out-patient work, for there still remained a large inhabited area exposed to danger. On April 24th a dressing-station was installed and opened at the estaminet Augustine Straat, a short distance out of Ypres on the Poperinghe road, where both soldiers and civilians were treated. During these dark days of the Second Battle of Ypres this station performed a great deal of strenuous and dangerous work, adding to the field-dressing work at the estaminet the duties of bringing in wounded from dressing-stations and aid-posts and evacuating these cases again from the station to the clearing hospitals. At the same time it was responsible for transporting all remaining civil inhabitants from the bombarded city. Wounded and refugees were supplied with hot soup and cocoa from the Unit's motor-kitchen. With the exception of one night when it had to be temporarily abandoned on account of the severity of the shell-fire, the station carried on this work until May 30th, by which date 82 civilians and 689 soldiers (mainly British), including some 450 of the first gassed cases, had been treated.

When the pressure of battle casualties had lessened, instructions were received to confine the work of the stations to civilians only. A more central place for this activity was found in Vlamertinghe, where the station was accordingly transferred on May 30th. At the estaminet " In het Schaapstaal," on the Ouderdom road, the work was resumed with one doctor and a small staff of dressers and drivers, and visiting rounds were started in Vlamertinghe, Kruisstraat, Dickebusch, Ouderdom, Brielen, Locre, La Clytte and Westoutre.

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Once again, however, the site chosen proved too exposed for much medical work to be undertaken, and the repeated bombardment of the neighbouring railway led to another move on June 20th.

The fourth centre of work was at Dickebusch, selected as a spot from which the greater number of patients dealt with in that area were accessible, and it proved to be the most permanent station of this particular section, remaining there till the middle of December. The house taken—the Château d'Angellis—stood on the outskirts of the village on the La Clytte road, and although its upper story was in view of the German lines, was well away from the area which usually came under the enemy's fire. The greatly reduced number of cases due to the evacuation of the neighbourhood's civil population led to its closing down on December 21st, 1915. The rest of the area served from Dickebusch could more easily be worked after that date from Poperinghe, as not only were the roads from that town in better repair, but the Unit had already a convenient base there in the Château Elisabeth and the motor station at the Parc St. Georges.

The other stations which remain to be noticed in this chapter are those of Romarin and Woesten. The former opened on July 10th, 1915, at the Ferme Poulouche, near Neuve Eglise, at the request of the British Army authorities, was transferred to Romarin on the 17th, where it remained until closed on August 2nd. During the three weeks of its existence 78 visits were paid to patients in their own homes in the districts of Neuve Eglise, Ploegsteert and Dranoutre, and nine dressings done at the station itself. The two former districts required comparatively little attention, being better served medically than was general in Belgium, and as the Dranoutre area could be supervised easily enough from Dickebusch, the station had only a short career.

At Woesten, where the earliest civilian medical work was done, in connection with the ambulance section stationed there in November, 1914, the out-patient work was at first carried on in the school buildings allotted to the ambulance section, but when these were struck by a shell a move was made to the outskirts of the village. This again became unsafe in the spring of 1915, and in the woods outside Woesten a tent was erected, to which patients came for treatment or advice. This continued until August, from which time the work in the Woesten district was done by doctors stationed at Poperinghe or Dickebusch, until its conclusion in May, 1916. During 1916 the doctor who undertook this work from Poperinghe treated large numbers of tubercular cases in the district and elsewhere, making in all over 1,000 injections of tuberculin. The results were on the whole satisfactory, in the majority of cases a decided improvement being noticed, but great difficulties were experienced in giving continuous treatment. It is only to be regretted that complete statistics of the work done at the Woesten centre do not seem to be available.

A large amount of out-patient work was also found in connection with the milk-distribution carried on in Belgian villages and described later. About the beginning of July, 1915, it was decided that a weekly visit should be paid

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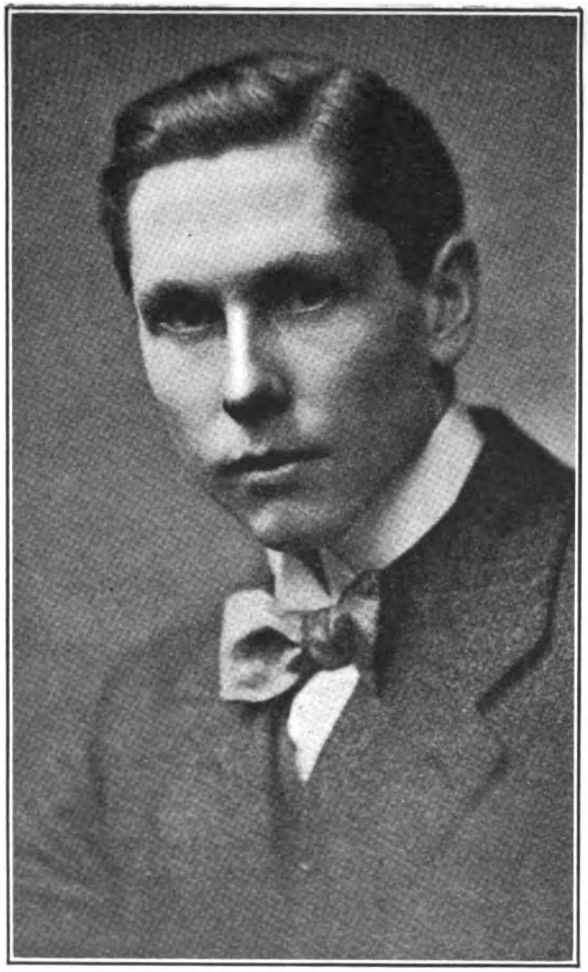
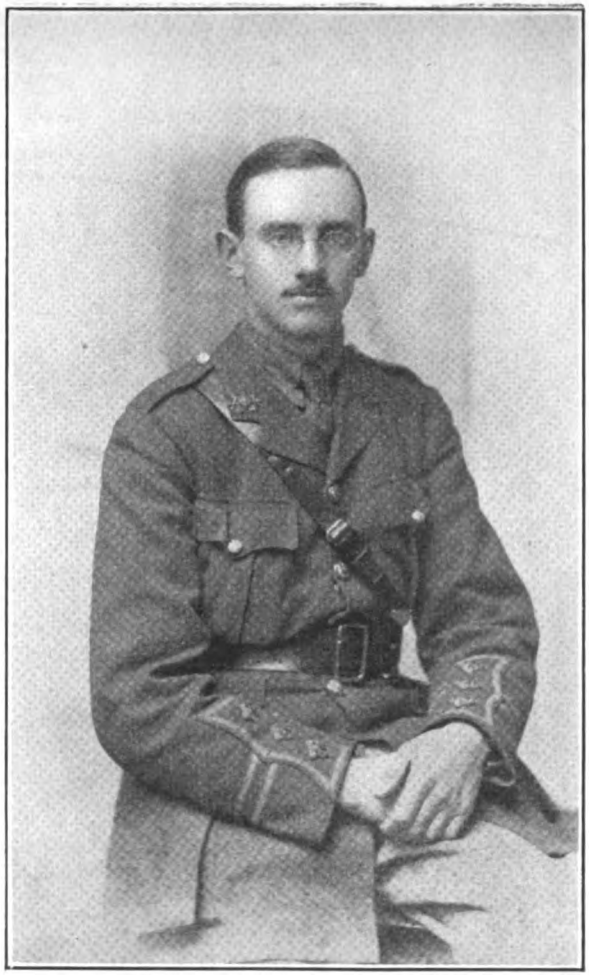


Plate VI P. J. BAKER.



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by one of the Unit's doctors to each of the milk-distributing stations. Adults, as well as children, were treated and advised on these rounds and a large area of country covered, the following villages being visited once a week: St. Jean-ter-Biezen, Watou, La Clytte, Abeele, Crombeke, Proven, Reninghelst, Westvleteren, Westoutre, and Locre. During the first month 315 children and 33 adults passed through the visiting doctor's hands. The number of children treated remained at about 200 a month as long as the work lasted, but that of adult patients rose from 50 to 60 at first, to 200 or even more in 1916. In all, about 2,300 children and 2,000 adults were attended to in this way, suffering from a great variety of major and minor complaints. With the object of combating the heavy rate of infant mortality a small handbook in Flemish on the care of infants was distributed, and produced a good effect in many directions. It was entitled "Een Boekje voor Moeders, gratis uitgegeven voor het Wel der Belgische Kleinen door de Aide Civile Belge."

An interesting footnote to the civilian visiting work is found in the work of the Unit's dentist at Poperinghe, and at the Wisques Orphanage, between October, 1915, and May, 1916. At the former place 147 appointments were kept for civilian patients, and at the latter 66 orphan girls were treated.

Anti-Typhoid Inoculations.

The anti-typhoid inoculations carried out by the F.A.U. in Flanders form one of its largest contributions to the work of combating the spread of the epidemic in the opening months of 1915. In January the Unit undertook, at the request of the medical authorities of the Second Army, the duty of inoculating the civil population of Ypres and the districts in that sector occupied by the British. Large numbers also were inoculated in the country north of Ypres, at that time in French occupation.

Work on this undertaking was started on February 5th, 1915, when about half-a-dozen stations were opened in the town of Ypres. The Ste. Marie Convent, already known to the inhabitants as the centre of the out-patient work, was open daily for this additional purpose, and before long a large room in the building was thronged every morning with persons waiting for the injection. The town was placarded with notices in French and Flemish explaining the necessity of the operation and showing where and at what hours it would be performed. The other smaller inoculation centres in the town were open during certain hours on two or three days a week. A card was given to each person treated, showing the date of the first and second injections, signed by the doctor to serve as a certificate which could, if necessary, be produced by the bearer. As inoculation was not made compulsory by the Belgian Government until April, the task of persuading a certain number of the population to submit themselves to the ordeal was not an easy one, and the stations had to be kept open a longer time than might otherwise have been necessary, simply that these people might be gradually reconciled to undergoing the operation.

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The greatest part of the task was performed during February and March, and by March 20th there were eleven stations open in Ypres and the district regularly visited by the inoculating doctor. Notice was given of the date of his next round and as many people as possible were persuaded to present themselves. At this time the area regularly traversed stretched from Pilkem and Woesten in the north to Dickebusch in the south, from Ypres in the east to Proven in the west. The evacuation of civilians occasioned by the Second Battle of Ypres towards the end of April meant the cessation of work in the Ypres district, but work was continued in the Woesten and Poperinghe areas.

Many persons due to come up for a second dose were lost sight of, and, though in a certain number of cases the second injection may have been given by Belgian or other doctors, the injections were probably never completed in the majority of these instances. After the main bulk of this inoculation work had been completed, in April, 1915; the Belgian Government put into operation an act compelling all inhabitants to undergo this measure of protection, refusing any passes or "*permis de séjour*" to persons unable to show that they had received the requisite doses. In May the Government, through Dr. Dewulf, undertook the continuation of the system under these compulsory powers.

After July, 1915, when most of the ground had already been covered, a small number of inoculations was still done by the Unit doctors in connection with the out-patient and visiting work, and by the time the work ceased, in May, 1916, the total number of injections of Belgian civilians had reached 26,700.*

Thousands of these injections were made in most unfavourable circumstances —in the kitchen of a farmhouse, in the bar-parlour of a village estaminet, in the cellar-dwellings of Ypres, and often enough made on persons living not too healthy lives—but, so far as could be discovered, no cases of local sepsis were known.

A specimen of the card which was handed to the civilian on his first inoculation and completed on his second, is reproduced below :—

.....

VACCINATIE TEGEN DE TYPHUSKOORTSEN

Kom terug om de tweede maal gevaccineerd te worden op den hieronder aangeteekenden dag. Het is volstrekt noodzakelijk zich een tweede maal te laten vaccineeren om vrij te blijven van de typhuskoortsen.

Keer hier terug de zelfde uur, den .....

.....

1. .....

2. .....

FRIENDS' AMBULANCE UNIT
BRITISH RED CROSS SOCIETY.

*For detailed statistics see Appendix "A."

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Water Purification.

The first bombardment of Ypres in November, 1914, succeeded in destroying the town's water supply. The mains were broken at many places, and there were few features of the destruction wrought by the German shelling that had more disastrous effects on the health of the remaining inhabitants. Families were obliged to draw water for all purposes either from the moat surrounding the town, or from disused wells reopened for the emergency, or from underground rain-water tanks. All these sources of water-supply were a danger to the common health; the moat water was stagnant and obviously polluted, while the wells and tanks were as often as not contaminated by their proximity to cesspools or sewers, many of which had also been damaged by the bombardment.

This state of affairs, bad enough in itself, became doubly serious with the outbreak of the typhoid epidemic in the town, and, if not originally responsible for its birth, was certainly an important factor in the rapid spread of the fever among the civilian population. Its consequent danger to troops in the district is obvious. A report from one of the F.A.U. doctors at Ypres, written in January, 1915, stated that the increase of enteric fever and allied bowel troubles amongst the inhabitants of the town was due largely to the fact that, since the destruction of the normal supply, they had been drinking water from the moat, the canals, pits and old wells. In confirmation, a specimen of this moat water was taken for bacteriological examination by the O.C. Mobile Hygiene Laboratory, Second Army, shortly before the British troops arrived in Ypres, and found to be entirely unfit for human consumption. On his advice, therefore, it was decided that the Friends' Ambulance Unit, in addition to its other work in connection with the epidemic, should arrange for a supply of chemically-treated water for drinking purposes to the civilians.

The organisation of this work was at once undertaken, with the aid of Mr. W. W. Buckton of the B.R.C.S., who had been attached to Hon. Lionel Holland's Unit at Dunkirk, the Belgian Civil Engineer, M. Vanderghote, and the Town Clerk of Works, who provided local labourers for the pumping work. Large barrels of 50 and 130 gallons capacity and a number of pumps were purchased, and these were erected in the first instance at four convenient points in the town, at the Lille and Menin gates, at the canal in the Rue Dickebusch, and at the Caserne.

The water pumped into the barrels was treated with chloride of lime, and the public were informed by placards of the dangers arising from the consumption of impure water, and the new facilities afforded them of obtaining a chemically-treated supply. At the same time a stock of chloride of lime was placed with the Commissaire of Police for civilian use, and later a distribution of this material was made from a cart which went round the streets twice a week.

The first two barrel stations began the work of supply on January 31st. By the middle of February six stations were functioning, including one on the Zonnebeke road for the suburb of Potyze, and a seventh was opened at the end of March. With the exception of some supplied to the French troops in the

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town before the arrival of the British, the whole of this water was distributed for civilian use. For the British troops a separate supply was organised by the Army sanitary authorities, with some assistance from Mr. Buckton, at the Bassin de Natation. Most of the actual pumping and chlorinating work was done by local Belgian labour, though inspections of all the stations were made once or twice daily by a member of the Unit. The barrèls themselves were emptied and cleaned out with permanganate of potash once every week. The daily average supply amounted to 11,462 gallons.*

So far as Ypres itself was concerned the results of this work were fairly satisfactory, but in the outlying districts, where the water supply was almost equally dangerous, the distance was often too great for the inhabitants to fetch the treated water. In these parts, therefore, arrangements were made through the village Curés, for a local house-to-house distribution of the chloride of lime itself, a small metal spoon being also supplied, bearing a label with all necessary instructions in Flemish and French; one spoonful of the powder was enough to render 15 litres of water fit for human consumption. By March 5th, this system was also established at Dickebusch, where bacteriological examination showed the normal sources to be infected, and during the month it was extended further to La Clytte, Ouderdom, Vlamertinghe, and Poperinghe. Exact records of the amount distributed in this way are lacking, as much of it was carried out by local authorities, and the chloride itself, after the preliminary distributions, was supplied by the Army. But an estimate from notes on the work would place the number of houses visited at about 5,000. The cost of this system of water purification was paid by the F.A.U., the bulk of the expenditure being on local labour at the barrel stations.

Apart from the difficulties of distance involved in the barrels system, the chief trouble experienced in the work as a whole was to persuade the civilians in those parts that the treated water, with its slightly acrid taste and cloudy appearance, was safe to drink, while that which they had was likely to be injurious. It was freely admitted by those in charge of the scheme that, even in Ypres, it did not afford a real solution of the water supply difficulties, and it was proposed in a report issued in March, to repair the main supply if ever the town was safe from further serious bombardment. The events of the end of April, however, showed that such a proposal was founded on too optimistic a basis, and with the evacuation and destruction of Ypres the whole of the water-purification work came to an end.

General Relief Work, 1914-1916.

Foreword.

The work of the civilian hospitals at Ypres and Poperinghe brought the Unit into close touch with a mass of extreme poverty and misery, existing throughout the whole area of uninvaded Belgium and the adjacent French Department of the Nord, which demanded the organisation of further measures

*For details see Appendix "A."

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Plate VII

AUGUSTINE STRAAT DRESSING STATION, YPRES.

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of general relief, over and above the purely medical treatment already arranged. Villages were hopelessly overcrowded by the unregulated floods of refugees, with lamentable results to the normal standards of living. A pure milk supply, for example, was unprocurable; workers, male and female, were without employment, and families driven from their homes by the tide of invasion were often almost without clothing; every village sheltered numbers of orphaned and homeless children. The most sensitive index of the conditions of life, the infantile death rate, rose rapidly in some areas to such a height that a new-born babe's chance of living a twelvemonth was shown to be practically non-existent.

Small beginnings of some of the relief measures needed—as for instance, the supply of milk and clothing, the evacuation and feeding of refugees, and the housing of orphans—were made quite early in Ypres and Poperinghe. But it was clear that systematic work would not be possible without a detailed enquiry over the whole area, and this was accordingly begun by a few members of the Unit early in April, 1915. The closing down of the work at Ypres gave a number of additional helpers whose aid made it possible to carry through the investigation more rapidly.

In Belgium 55 towns and villages, and over the frontier in France 60, were visited, and information was gathered from as many sources as possible with regard to the number of refugees, indigent folk, orphans, the prevalence of unemployment and overcrowding, the school accommodation for children, and the need for evacuation if any. From the data thus obtained, the foundation was laid for a broad scheme of general relief, carried out with the co-operation of the Curés, Bourgmestres or Maires, and any relief committees that might exist. The various sections of this work are described separately in the following pages, and most of the ground originally staked out was successfully covered. Unfortunately, owing to military considerations, it was not possible for the Unit to proceed with a scheme for providing hut accommodation in the overcrowded villages at a time when it was badly needed, but later the Belgian Government itself undertook this work and carried it out with a considerable measure of success. The extensive evacuations however, carried out by the Unit, assisted greatly in solving this difficult problem before the authorities took it in hand.

Milk Distribution.

The serious conditions prevailing among infants arising from the difficulty in obtaining milk, led the Unit to organise a scheme for the regular distribution of the necessary supply in quart bottles to various Belgian villages; this work was started in March, 1915. A summary of its scope is best provided by the table printed in Appendix " A."

At each village a station was selected, usually the Curé's house or a convent, to which the Unit's cars brought the daily supply, and from which the mothers received their allowance. The milk was at first obtained from the Laiterie at Poperinghe, later from the Trappist monastery near Watou, and two Belgian

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farms, but in the closing stages of the work the bulk of the supply came from the Laiterie at Steenvoorde. Every care was taken to ensure that the milk was pure, the full bottles being sealed and the empties washed out at the Laiteries under a daily inspection by a member of the Unit. The milk and the bottles were provided by the funds of the Aide Civile Belge and for the most part were distributed free. After December, 1915, those who could afford the slight expense were asked to pay for their allowance, and by the end about one-third of the total amount was being paid for. By that time the general conditions in the whole area had much improved, and the necessity for actually giving away the milk had in many cases disappeared. There still, however, remained villages where military works occupied much of what little pasturage there was, and where consequently a regular milk supply from outside was a necessity, and in these places the distribution continued to be of importance. From February, 1916, however, the amount sent out began to fall from the average of 500—600 bottles daily, and by April only about 350 were needed per day. On May 15th, 1916, the work was brought to a close.

Apart from the direct benefits resulting from the milk distribution, it should be borne in mind that a vast amount of valuable out-patient work amongst civilians was opened out, as described above, from the various stations. The infants and young children for whose benefit the milk was supplied were regularly seen by the visiting doctor at the centres, and through this whole families were brought into touch with medical assistance which might not otherwise have reached them.

Civilian Evacuations, 1914-1916.

The removal by motor-car of women, children and infirm persons from places of danger has been an important branch of the Friends' Ambulance Unit's work among Belgian civilians, and its comparatively simple nature does not need much explanation. The earliest civilian evacuation recorded took place on November 28th, 1914, when cars were sent from the Woesten station to remove about 60 old people from the almshouses of Ypres to Poperinghe. Similar work was carried on from the Sacré Cœur Hospital, as the necessity arose, so long as the hospital was open, and by the end of April 2,140 persons had been transported from the town and outlying districts to places of safety, of whom about 1,200 were removed only after the 17th of that month. In Ypres itself the evacuations continued right through the bombardments of April until the entire population had been cleared (May 10th), the last to leave the stricken city being the Curé of St. Pierre, a devoted collaborator in this as in so many other branches of the Unit's relief work.

The final evacuation of Ypres, however, did not mean the end of this work, for after that date over 800 children and about a score of adults were removed from various villages exposed to the dangers of shell fire. Already, before the destruction of Ypres, numbers of children had been taken to the Aide Civile Belge Orphanages at Wisques and Wizernes, and in the meantime

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this body had come to an arrangement with the Comité Franco-Américain for the removal of children from the exposed areas to its similar institutions near Paris. These evacuations were carried out throughout the summer according to the agreed programme, the Unit's cars conveying the children to Poperinghe, and latterly to Hazebrouck, whence they were taken to their destination by train. Meanwhile, however, the Belgian Government had planned their system of Colonies Scolaires for refugee children, and the A.C.B. on behalf of M. Biebuyck, Commissaire of the Arrondissement of Ypres, undertook the removal of the children from the front-line villages that they might be sent to these school colonies.

From November, 1914, down to May, 1916, although figures during the first six months of the period are only approximate, the total numbers thus evacuated were 2,943, and some idea of the district served may be gathered from the following list of places from which these were removed :—

Ypres.	Poperinghe.
Dickebusch.	La Clytte.
Kemmel.	Dranoutre.
Kruisstraat.	Oostvleteren.
Reninghelst.	St. Sixte.
Locre.	Woesten.
Ploegsteert.	Alveringhem.
Neuve Eglise.	Elverdinghe.
Le Bizet.	Vlamertinghe.

Later in the year, after the retirement of the Unit from the Aide Civile Belge, a number of evacuations from the Armentières district were undertaken, in conjunction with a scheme for the removal of children from the dangerous villages and towns in that corner of French territory. Early in 1917, an ambulance and driver were stationed at Hazebrouck for this purpose, and an account of the fuller development of this work will be found later in the pages dealing with the French Civilian Evacuation Section (page 51).

Orphanages.

Bombardment and disease left many orphans in Ypres and the surrounding countryside during the first winter of the war, and efforts had to be made to provide for the housing and education of these helpless victims. The Curé of St. Pierre strongly urged the Friends' Ambulance Unit and the Countess van den Steen and Countess d'Ursel, that orphanages should be set up at a safe distance behind the line, where as many of these homeless children as possible might be sent, with the result that a joint scheme was organised which later had fruition at the orphanages at Wisques and Wizernes.

The first accommodation, however, was at the Trappist Monastery of St. Sixte, Westvleteren, where 28 boys from Ypres were lodged on March 16th,

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1915, their number being increased to 40 in a couple of weeks' time. Owing to various considerations, it was decided to move them to Wizernes, near St. Omer, and here, on May 7th, the boys' orphanage was established under the care of the Abbé Dilger and Mère Godelieve of the Ypres Orphanage. In the middle of the village, at the foot of the low hills, accommodation was found in two buildings a little distance apart. There was a spacious playground, and although certain extensions had to be made to cope with increasing numbers, which rose eventually to 75 boys, these premises proved very satisfactory.

For the girls' orphanage the ancient Château at Wisques, home of the Sainte Aldegondes, was taken and likewise proved both in situation and internal arrangements an excellent choice. Four orphan girls went there on March 26th, 1915, under the charge of the Abbé Declerq of the Ypres Collège, and more were sent after the place had been fully equipped until 99 were housed in the Château. On April 23rd, a crèche was also opened in the same building, and there 26 babies, some of them saved from the wrecked and burning houses of Ypres, were cared for at the outset under the direction of two of the St. Camille nurses. When the Abbé Declerq resigned the directorship to take up another appointment, he was succeeded by the Curé of St. Pierre, the Abbé Delaere.

Both of these institutions at Wisques and Wizernes were staffed by Belgian nuns and civilian helpers, and were under the joint control of the Belgian Committee and the Friends' Ambulance Unit, until May, 1916, when the Unit relinquished its share in this work. Up till that time all the funds necessary for the maintenance of the orphanages had been found by the Aide Civile Belge. Afterwards the cost was defrayed by the refugee allowances from the French authorities and grants from the Belgian Minister of the Interior.

The health of the children was carefully watched by the doctors from the neighbouring hospital of Malassise; visits were paid regularly three times a week, first by two Belgian doctors from that institution, and later by a British military doctor. Classes for both boys and girls were provided, and these were subsidised by the Belgian Minister of Education at the beginning of June, 1916.

One had only to see the change in these children as the months passed, to realise the value of the work at the orphanages. They came to this quiet corner of Artois from shattered villages, some of them half-distraught, many of them grown filthy and verminous by long neglect. A few months later found them healthy, happy-faced children, working and playing in peaceful surroundings, not forgetful that they were exiles, but with now only a memory of the tragedies through which they had passed.

Schools.

In many villages close to the fighting line the risk of bombardment had led to the closing of the schools, with deplorable results to the children still remaining in these districts; in some places the boys and girls had been running wild so long that they were dangerously near lapsing into a state of savagery.

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Plate VIII ORPHANAGE AT WISQUES. Facing p 36

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Schools were badly needed, and when the bombardments of Poperinghe led to the departure of the teaching staff of the town schools, the opportunity was seized by the Aide Civile Belge of setting up one adjacent to the Elisabeth Hospital there. This was opened on June 19th, 1915, under the direction of two nuns, and had soon a daily average of about 320 children, many of whom were refugees from other places. As a result of the heavy shelling of August 22nd, this school was transferred to a safer site at the Ferme de Ryck, and was carried on there with equal success.

Another difficulty encountered in the refugee areas of the French Département du Nord was that scarcely any of the Belgian children living there could use the French schools owing to the difference in language. To meet this problem an experimental Flemish school was opened at Caestre early in June, 1915, with about 40 children attending. Before long, however, the numbers rose to 75, several children living in other villages walking a considerable distance to attend the classes. Both of these schools were inspected and favourably reported on by the Belgian Education Authorities, and at the beginning of 1916 were given grants in accordance with the Government scale.

School Colony.

At the end of September, 1915, a request came through to the Aide Civile Belge and the Unit from the Belgian Minister of War, for the evacuation and disposal of a number of children from several exposed villages. The Government's Colonies Scolaires were already full, and it was necessary to find and prepare a new establishment for their accommodation. Temporary shelter for some days was found in one of the hospital sheds at Poperinghe, and on October 11th and 12th, 60 children were conveyed to Merlimont Plage, south of Etaples, where excellent quarters had been found, after great difficulty, in an hotel. The colony was equipped for 120 children, staffed by Belgians, and, in spite of a slight diphtheria epidemic, was soon working smoothly. In December, when it held about 100 children, the Belgian Minister of the Interior took it under his control as one of the ordinary Colonies Scolaires.

Lace.

In normal times, lace-making is one of the most important industries of Flanders, many families earning a good part of their living by the practice of the art. The prevalent distress in the first winter of the war was accordingly greatly increased by the blow which war conditions dealt to the craft's prosperity; thread was hard to procure, and a market hard to find, and large numbers of lace-makers, who had fled from their homes leaving their outfits behind them, were now without the means of earning their own livelihood.

The Unit, in conjunction with the Aide Civile Belge, took up the work of re-establishing the Flemish lace industry in May, 1915, and continued its share in this task for twelve months. During that time the reconstruction of the industry was successfully accomplished and large numbers of families kept from idleness and want.

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Dépôts were set up in about forty towns and villages of Belgium and French Flanders, where the necessary materials for the manufacture of lace were obtainable and where the finished article was brought for disposal. Thread was sold at an advantageous rate to the workers, and their lace marketed for them. To the destitute refugee lace-workers nearly 1,000 cushions were supplied free, as well as the smaller articles of equipment. The sale of the output was for the most part secured in Paris and the United States through the co-operation of the Comité Dentellier Franco-Belge-Américain, and in London through the agency of the Unit. Every effort was made to give a fair price for the work done, and it turned out that on the whole the women's earnings were greater than in ordinary times.

The number of women and girls working under this scheme reached its maximum of over 1,400 in December, 1915, after which the totals showed a slight decrease. When the Unit handed over its part in the work in May, 1916, the actual total was over 1,000 and the total number that had passed through the books of the various dépôts about 2,000. Lessons in the craft were given to about 70 girls at a lace-making school established at Poperinghe.

During the twelve months of the Unit's connection with this work, it involved an expenditure of about £1,000 in excess of the receipts for the sales, a sum which was largely accounted for by the expense of providing cushions and other outfits to refugee workers and by a stock of some £800 worth of lace and thread handed over to the A.C.B. At the time of the Unit's withdrawal, however, the scheme as a whole was self-supporting.

The area covered was a large one, as will best be seen from the following list of lace dépôts, given in the order of their establishment :—

Caestre.
Leysele.
Stavele.
Westoutre.
Poperinghe.
Crombeke.
Beveren.
Godewaersvelde.
Boeschepe.
Flètre.
Meteren.
Locre.
Dranoutre.
St. Sixte.
Isenberghe.
Wulveringhem.
Vinckem.
Alveringhem.
Wormhoudt.
Herzeele.
Houtkerque.
Watou.
Loo.
Oostvleteren.
Steenvoorde.
Winnezeele.
Reninghelst.
Neuve Eglise.
La Panne.
Furnes.
Woesten.
Ste. Marie Capelle.
Hondschoote.
Eggewaertscapelle.
Ghyverinschove.
Houthem.
Nieppe.
Vlamertinghe.
Coxyde.
Proven.

Distribution of Clothing.

The distribution of clothing to those in need was carried on by the Unit from December, 1914, to May, 1916, from stores established at various times at the following centres : at Woesten and Ypres from December, 1914, to the

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end of April, 1915; at Poperinghe from February, 1915, to May, 1915; and at Caestre from that time onwards.

At Ypres the clothing store was kept at the Sacré Cœur Hospital, and garments were served out to deserving cases on the recommendation of Curés, nuns or the visiting doctors. The need in that town, as may be imagined, was very great, and up to the middle of March, 1915, some 3,500 persons had been supplied.

Before the final evacuation of Ypres a second store was opened in Poperinghe from which distributions were made on similar lines. This was transferred to Caestre in May, from which centre a systematic distribution was carried out over the whole of uninvaded Belgium, and to Belgian refugees resident in that part of France lying between the frontier and the line Dunkirk—Cassel—Hazebrouck—Armentières. A member of the Unit visited all the towns and villages of this area from time to time, investigating the needs of each district, and, where necessary, clothes dépôts for distribution were set up. By May, 1915, about 15,000 articles of clothing had been supplied to some 5,000 persons, mainly in Belgium, and two months later the number of garments had risen to 33,000. The final total of clothes distributed came to over 75,000, a work which touched 37 towns and villages in Belgium and 23 in French territory. In May, 1916, the work, which during that spring had steadily diminished in volume, was left to the Aide Civile Belge. Most of the clothing was provided by the generosity of Friends in England, though some was made at the employment centres mentioned below. A sum of about £740 was spent on clothing, of which total the Friends' Ambulance Unit supplied about one-third before it came into connection with the Aide Civile Belge, from whose funds the balance was forthcoming.

Employment of Women.

This was arranged on lines very similar to those on which the lace manufacture was carried on. A score of women were employed in making clothes at Ypres until April, 1915, after which centres were established at Caestre and Watou. At these latter places from 40 to 60 women were engaged in sewing and tailoring, the material being supplied to them, and the finished clothes handed over to the refugee clothing stores for distribution.

Feeding of Refugees.

The earliest work of this kind was done at Ypres early in December, 1914, where large numbers of people destitute of any regular means of subsistence were supplied with food at the Ste. Marie Convent, the centre of the out-patient work, and in some cases at their own homes. During the whole of that winter refugees were to be seen passing through Ypres from the outlying villages near the firing line, and to many of these soup was provided from the Unit's motor-kitchen attached to the Sacré Cœur Hospital. Up to March 20th, 1915, over 600 people had been succoured in this way.

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The civilian evacuations of the Ypres district during April, 1915, were accompanied by a great deal of misery and privation. Thousands of people, of all ages, from old men to new-born infants, were herded together at the rail-heads to be despatched in the special trains sent up to deal with the overwhelming rush. They had, as a rule, little food, and little money to buy nourishment, with a long railway journey before them, and many arrived exhausted at the stations, carrying on their backs such of their belongings as they could. These circumstances led the Unit to provide food for these trainloads of refugees at the rail-heads. Provisions for them were placed in each compartment of the train. This work was carried out at Vlamertinghe, Poperinghe, and Abeele stations as occasion demanded until the middle of June, 1915, when the daily number of refugees became very small, and the arrangement was suspended. During these six or seven weeks over 15,000 refugees were thus fed, as many as 1,000 being once supplied on one train and the number often rising above 500 per day. In this connection it is also worthy of note that in the course of the evacuations of children described previously, food for over 1,000 of them was provided.

Civilian Motor Work, 1914-1915.

The organisation of the Unit's motor service in connection with the civilian work described in the preceding pages rested on the general plan of

(*a*) The Unit's H.Q. at Dunkirk, dependent on which were

(*b*) an Advanced Base situated in the Poperinghe area, and

(*c*) Out-Stations supplied from the latter.

The Headquarters Base maintained, besides of course commissariat and general stores, a motor stores for the supply of petrol, tyres and spare parts, while two, or sometimes three, garages were used for effecting larger repair work and such general overhauls as were better carried out there than at the front garage, where pits and machine tools were not available.

The work of the Advanced Base may be classed under the three heads of stores, garage, and transport work, and the personnel of this section numbered on an average about 18. Its situation changed as circumstances required. Stationed originally at Woesten in November, 1914, it was moved to an estaminet in the Berthenplaats at Poperinghe in the course of the next month. When the first heavy shells were put into Poperinghe, considerable damage was done in this neighbourhood and a second move was made on April 26th to No. 11, Rue d'Ypres. Here it remained only a few days, and early in May, 1915, a more permanent site for the advanced base was found in the Parc St. Georges, an estaminet just beyond the Château Elisabeth, on the Reninghelst road. In the spring of 1916, however, this position was found to be unnecessarily dangerous, shells having fallen on several occasions in and around the billet, and the station was transferred in April to Steenvoorde. Here it was main-

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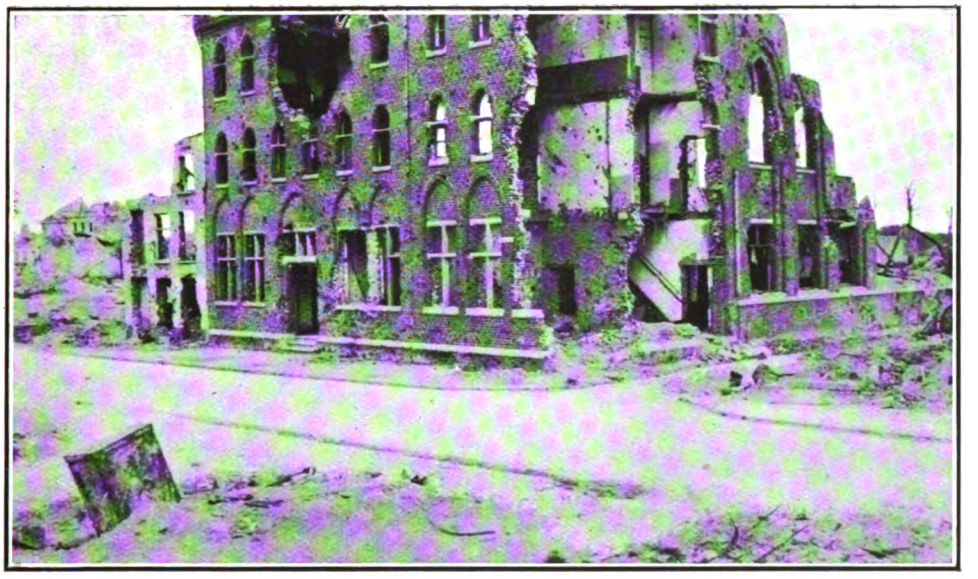

Plate IX — STE. MARIE CONVENT, YPRES. — Photo 1919

Facing p 40 — PARC ST. GEORGES, POPERINGHE. — Photo 1919

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tained until the middle of June, when, most of the Unit's cars having been withdrawn from this area, and the civilian work being reduced to very small proportions, it was finally closed down.

Stores of all kinds were brought daily to the advanced base by a lorry from Dunkirk, and a stock equal to a week's requirements of the various out-stations was maintained. Early in 1915 a very useful workshop lorry was attached to the station, equipped with lathe and lifting jib, and some months later a covered garage was available, which made easier the undertaking of more important repairs. At the same time this base was used, when an adequate number was forthcoming, as a reserve park for cars, to replace breakdowns at the out-stations or to deal with any emergency work that might arise. In particular this reserve was found of great service for the evacuation of civilians from the front villages.

As a centre from which transport was available, distinct from the separate field stations, the advanced base played a very important part. The largest amount of driving for the Unit's civilian relief measures was done by cars and drivers from Poperinghe. In December, 1914, they helped the Ypres station in the evacuation of wounded and sick from the aid-posts, as well as in the removal of many refugees from that neighbourhood. When the Château Elisabeth was opened in January, 1915, they supplied ambulances for the collection of cases for the hospital, and during the following four months, five or six cars were regularly engaged on this work. From February two cars were usually needed daily for the Search Party, engaged in the mapping of infectious billets and general sanitary investigation, while at the same time the daily distributions of milk and clothes to refugees were performed with the aid of two or three ambulances or lorries.

The period of greatest activity at the Poperinghe base however, came at the end of April and during May, 1915, when not only was there a steady increase in the routine duties for the hospital and search-party, civilian relief and doctor's rounds, but a mass of emergency work arising from the Second Battle of Ypres. Under the orders of the A.P.M. of the Vth Corps the village of St. Jean, to the north-west of Ypres on the Roulers road, was cleared of its entire population on April 21st, after several days' work, and at the same time the final evacuation of the inhabitants of Ypres was started. It was estimated that there still remained about 500 people in various parts of the city, and the task of their removal was carried on until completed on May 10th. On May 4th, all the civilians in the Menin road area and about 200 others had been cleared. By this time the condition of the town made the work by no means easy; falling houses had blocked up many streets, shell-holes made others impassable; some cars were put out of action by shell fire and others broke down under the strain of continuous running; and, hardest of all in some respects, it was frequently necessary to use pressure to induce the people themselves to leave their homes. By May 8th, however, only a score of people remained in the whole city, and on the 10th, these survivors, the Curé of St. Pierre the

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last of them, were taken away. They could have found little now to bind them to the place, for on that same day came the final destruction of the city by fire.

Another urgent call on the strained resources of the Poperinghe bases during those crowded weeks was for the evacuation of the patients from the Château Elisabeth to the British Hospital at Malassise, near St. Omer. This work was begun on April 24th, and continued till the 30th, cars being sent down to the hospital as often as they could be spared from the pressing work at the front. It was a time of heavy and unrelieved strain for both cars and drivers; the latter worked in relays, and frequently gave up their well-earned rest to help to form these improvised convoys running from the Château to Malassise. Each one of these trips meant a run of 80 kilometres added to the day's total.

By June, however, the volume of work at the Parc St. Georges was sinking to its normal level, and a number of cars supplied by the B.R.C.S. with their drivers were withdrawn. From this time until the withdrawal of the base on May 30th, 1916, work continued regularly and for the most part was concerned with the supply of ambulances for the Château Elisabeth and the Ferme de Rycke, lorries for milk and clothes distributions, touring-cars for the Search Party, inoculations and visiting-doctors' rounds; three or four cars were usually in reserve or under repair.

The third branch of the motor-service, the out-stations, had its most important section at Ypres. To this station an average of about 12 cars was attached almost continuously from December, 1914, to the following April, posted at the Unit's Sacré Cœur Hospital on the Vlamertinghe road. Throughout that time these cars were busily engaged in the collection of wounded or sick civilians for the hospital or the dressing-station at the Convent Ste. Marie, the carrying of the doctors on their visiting rounds, the transport work in connection with water purification, or the house-to-house sanitary investigations. At times also a considerable amount of work was found in the evacuations of such convalescents or refugees as could be induced to leave the city. After the final clearance of Ypres early in May, the number of cars employed in the Ypres area was greatly reduced and those needed were sent up daily from Poperinghe. Despite this reduction, however, the records for May were the largest that had been reached, standing as they did at 6,225 kilometres run, with 1,428 persons carried.

When the Sacré Cœur was closed, an off-shoot of the Ypres station was formed on April 24th at the Augustine Straat dressing-station, an account of which has already been given. One car and driver only were attached to this post, but four cars were regularly sent up from the advanced base on 12-hour shifts. Shelled out of their billet on May 30th, the party moved to Vlamertinghe and thence for the same reason to Dickebusch on June 21st. Here it remained with one touring car for the doctor and one ambulance until December, 1915. To three other civilian dressing-stations cars were supplied; to Woesten from December, 1914, to August, 1915, and to Neuve Eglise and Romarin during July and August, 1915.

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From the beginning of May, 1915, the centre of the Unit's relief work was at Caestre, where a group of five cars, tourers and lorries, was usually maintained. These were employed in the general work of investigation into refugee requirements, the milk and clothing distributions, the work in connection with the lace industry, and the supervision and transport required by the orphanages and other activities of the Aide Civile Belge. In April, 1916, the Caestre station was removed to Steenvoorde, between Poperinghe and Cassel, where it was joined by the motor repair section from the Parc St. Georges.

Finally there remains to be noted the service in connection with the civilian hospital established successively at Hazebrouck, in tents and the Barge at Watten, and on the Barge alone on the canal at Bergues. Attached to this there were generally one ambulance, one touring car and one motor-cycle, with occasional additions as passing needs required.

Throughout the whole of this motor work, and especially during times of pressure, the satisfactory fulfilment of demands made on the department was a matter of more difficulty and anxiety than may appear at a first glance. The supply of cars and drivers was seldom able to do more than just deal with the work in hand, and was never such as to allow the maintenance of a real reserve for emergencies. When unusual needs arose in one station, as was constantly occurring, it meant that men and cars had to be speedily transferred there from some other centre. At times this had its difficulties, but it had also the highly desirable result that no station ever suffered from long periods of slackness, and the maximum of work possible was performed with a minimum of resources.

The Search Party (later the Civilian Health and Sanitary Section).

I. The First Search Party.

In January, 1915, at a time when the typhoid epidemic had assumed serious proportions both among the civilians and the French troops in the Ypres area, there occurred a change in the military occupation which involved the billeting of the British troops in Ypres itself, and subsequently an extension of the British line as far north as Elverdinghe. There was thus a gradual occupation by the British of a considerable portion of that area which was the chief scene of the epidemic. As we have already seen, the medical authorities of the Army immediately took measures to combat the epidemic, asking the Friends' Ambulance Unit to continue its civilian hospital work, and also to ensure, as far as possible, the purification of the water supply at Ypres and the inoculation of the civilian population of the town and the surrounding villages.

To facilitate this work, arrangements were made in the middle of February for the formation at the Sacré Cœur Hospital of a Search Party, whose duties should be to conduct a house-to-house visitation, primarily with a view to notifying and removing to hospital all existing civilian cases of typhoid, and also in order to investigate the sanitary condition and the source of food and water

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supply of unsatisfactory houses; at the same time all civilians would be induced to attend the inoculation stations. This Search Party work was instituted with the approval of the medical authorities of the Second Army, acting through its Sanitary Officer, and received also the sanction of the Belgian Minister of the Interior, who, with the Medical Inspector General, visited the Sacré Cœur on February 19th. The authority of the Belgian Government gave the Unit the power to evacuate all typhoid cases to hospital. It was a valuable asset to the Unit in this as well as in other work connected with the epidemic, that thanks to the work done during the previous four months, it enjoyed the confidence both of the civil authorities and of the civilians themselves.

On February 20th, 1915, the Search Party started a thorough house-to-house search through the southern, then the British, half of the town of Ypres. As originally constituted, the party consisted of a doctor from the Sacré Cœur, four orderlies from the same hospital, four interpreters (usually nuns who could speak both Flemish and French) and two motor ambulances, with their drivers. Each house was entered by one of the orderlies and an interpreter, the occupants were questioned, and the doctor was summoned to examine all suspicious cases. Those cases suspected by him of being enteric were removed by ambulance to the Sacré Cœur.

Details concerning each house were entered on a card, showing the address, the name of the occupier, the name of any sick or recently sick persons, and the nature of the illness. Information was also given on the cards regarding the billeting of troops in houses where there had been any illness; the selling of milk, butter or beer; the source of the water supply, and state of sanitation; the number of civilians inoculated and the nature of any assistance required in case of distress.

The card-index of houses thus obtained was of considerable value both to the Army sanitary authorities and to the Friends' Ambulance Unit. It enabled the former to locate houses and areas likely to be a source of danger to troops, and provided the latter with information which was of great service in coping with the epidemic. Those houses in which a suspected case was discovered were immediately marked with a V, painted on the door, and when the patient was removed this V was converted into an X by the driver of the ambulance. (It should be mentioned that after the worst of the epidemic was over it was not found necessary for a doctor and ambulance to accompany the searchers, and cases were therefore not removed until the following day). These painted marks served as a guide to the Sanitary Section of the London Territorial Division, who, acting on information supplied each day from the cards, carried out as far as possible the necessary disinfection of houses from which cases had been removed. When this had been done a ring of yellow paint was placed round the X previously painted on the door.

The activities of the Search Party during its first two months gradually extended over a wider area, and by the end of April they had gone over most of the villages in the Ypres district, and as far back as Proven, Watou, and

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Poperinghe. It was found essential for those engaged on this work to devote their whole time to it and to acquire in addition to their knowledge of French at least enough Flemish to question the civilians on the subject of illness. Thus the party became composed of permanent searchers rather than of orderlies released from the hospital for a day's searching, and was able gradually to dispense with the services of interpreters.

By the date of the Second Battle of Ypres, the epidemic was declining in virulence, and the evacuation of the town and its immediate neighbourhood in May automatically cleared a portion of the infected area. But during June a search was made in Steenvoorde and Abeele to see whether the refugees from the Ypres area might not be sowing seeds of another outbreak there. Conditions, however, were found to be fairly satisfactory, and the work of the first Search Party came to an end. In the period between their formation and April 22nd, they had visited 5,900 houses all told, and of these 5,360 were judged habitable, the remaining 540 being either infected or definitely unfit for habitation.

II. The Second Search Party.

Although the worst of the epidemic was over by July, 1915, yet a large number of civilians who had evidently had typhoid was scattered throughout that portion of Belgium occupied by the Second Army, many of them discharged to their homes from one of the hospitals. Of the refugees who had fled from Ypres and the surrounding country at the end of April, a number had remained in farms and houses only a short way further back from the front, while that strip of Belgium nearest the frontier received a large proportion of the remainder. There was therefore a danger of the epidemic breaking out again, owing to the presence of "carriers," and especially in view of the fact that it had not yet been possible to complete the work of inoculation throughout the whole of this area. Moreover, other illnesses likely to be dangerous to troops were liable to occur, the more so because civilians were often found still living very close to the trenches and beyond the reach of such local Belgian doctors as remained, while sanitary arrangements in many houses were extremely bad. This situation led to the re-constitution of the Search Party in July, 1915.

The Belgian Ministry of the Interior had towards the end of May, 1915, sent to Poperinghe Dr. Léon Dewulf as *Inspecteur-Adjoint* of the *Service de Santé et de l'Hygiène*. The area which he controlled coincided almost exactly with that portion of Belgium occupied by the British Army. He exercised in this district the functions of Civilian Health and Sanitary Inspector, and was responsible for the removal of infectious cases, for their notification to the British through the Mobile Laboratories, and for the completion of the now compulsory inoculation of civilians. Under him there worked men of the Belgian Military Medical Service, who conducted investigations from house to house, and reported such cases of illness, bad sanitation and non-inoculation as they found.

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The area to be covered was, however, a large one for the number of men whom Dr. Dewulf had under him. The Os.C. Nos. 1 and 5 Mobile Laboratories were anxious that a thorough house-to-house search should be conducted as quickly as possible throughout all the Belgian territory in British occupation, primarily with a view to the elimination of typhoid "carriers." The Friends' Ambulance Unit was now thoroughly conversant with civilian work; at Poperinghe it had a suitable base for a search party, and it now had the necessary men available.

The party consisted of five and later of four searchers. There was no doctor, but each had had some experience of typhoid during the epidemic and at least an average layman's knowledge of sanitation and the symptoms of infectious illnesses generally. They could all speak French, and, what was more important, a little Flemish. The members of the party were taken each morning by car to a convenient centre, and then either singly or in pairs worked through an allotted area on foot, visiting each house in turn. Special passes for the work were issued to each member by the A.P.M. of the Corps concerned. If there had been any illness in a house since the beginning of the war, notes were taken of the name of the occupier, and all relevant particulars. Enquiries were made as to whether inoculation had been undergone, whether troops were billeted in or about the house, whether milk or beer was sold to soldiers, and the sanitation of each house was duly inspected. At the end of the day the party returned to Poperinghe, and a report was written stating the area that had been searched, the number of houses visited, and all details of these houses that had been specially noted. This was sent to the Mobile Laboratory concerned with the district, and where there were cases to be evacuated, specimens for analysis to be collected, or any further steps to be taken, particulars were forwarded from there to Dr. Dewulf. In some cases specimens for analysis were taken by members of the Search Party, but among those civilians who spoke only Flemish the necessary explanations proved difficult, and this work was for the most part performed by the Belgians under Dr. Dewulf.

The work was started on July 16th, and the first district searched was that between Poperinghe, Proven, Elverdinghe, and Vlamertinghe, including the last three villages. This area was finished by July 30th, and was found to contain 1,206 inhabited houses, of which 79 were reported, most of these having harboured cases of typhoid fever during the past months.

On July 30th, began a thorough search throughout the whole of that portion of Belgium controlled by No. 3 Mobile Laboratory at Bailleul, that is to say the area south of the Dickebusch—Locre road down to Le Bizet and the outskirts of Armentières. This was new ground so far as the Search Party was concerned. As there had been less severe fighting than in the Ypres salient, civilians were living considerably nearer the fighting line; there were inhabited houses in Vierstraat, and farms to the east of Kemmel, Neuve Eglise and Ploegsteert were occupied, in some cases within a few hundred yards of the trenches. On days of artillery activity the work was often not without excitement. But

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the typhoid epidemic had hardly spread beyond the northern half of this area, and consequently fewer past cases were discovered. There had, however, been a few fresh cases here during July. Of 1,500 houses visited in the whole area, rather more than 10 per cent. were reported, many cases being discovered of an illness lasting about seven days, the chief symptoms of which were fever, diarrhœa and vomiting.

From August 20th to 25th, a search was made in Poperinghe itself, where 808 inhabited houses were visited and 78 reported. The Town Major was provided with a list of those houses where sanitation appeared particularly bad and needed attention. This was followed in early September by a search over the country between Poperinghe, Ouderdom, Dickebusch, Ypres, Brielen and Elverdinghe. Some of this had been covered in July, and work of the same nature had been carried out during the summer by the Medical Officer of the 3rd Divisional Train. But, besides the possibility of fresh epidemics, there was a constant movement of refugees which made revisiting necessary, and 1,047 houses were visited and 103 reported. Several fresh cases of enteric were found from time to time during this period both by the searchers and by the Unit's doctors who were working among the civilians. The Belgian searchers under Dr. Dewulf were meanwhile covering the area to the west of that mentioned above.

From September 11th to 29th, work was done over the frontier in the communes of Boeschepe, Godewaersvelde, Berthen, St. Jans Cappel and Meteren, in order to discover if there were any typhoid carriers among the Belgian refugees in this district. From the local authorities, a list was obtained of the houses in each commune containing refugees. Specimens were taken from 18 houses in which there were Belgians who had suffered from the epidemic before they became refugees.

During the first half of October another investigation was conducted throughout the portion of Belgium from Neuve Eglise southwards, and also, by permission of the French authorities, in the district lying between Nieppe and Armentières. In this latter district, among the suburbs of Armentières near the River Lys, a great number of cases were found of a fever lasting from about four to fourteen days, accompanied by diarrhœa and occasional vomiting. Later and during November the whole area controlled by No. 1 Mobile Laboratory was again traversed. All past cases of typhoid from which specimens had not been taken were again reported. A certain number of cases of fever and diarrhœa of a mild form were discovered, and a number of uninoculated civilians were reported. This was followed by some work in the district south of Neuve Eglise, where cases of measles had occurred among the troops. A few cases among civilians were discovered, and a few suspected cases of diphtheria reported. For this work three Searchers were temporarily billeted in Bailleul owing to the difficulty of reaching the district from Poperinghe when the days were short and roads bad. Towards the end of January, 1916, the Search Party visited houses in the Kemmel—Locre—Westoutre—Dranoutre area. A few past cases of typhoid fever not previously notified, and also one

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or two present cases of diphtheria, were found. During this period the place of No. 3 Mobile Laboratory, at Bailleul, was taken by No. 5 Canadian Mobile Laboratory.

After February 8th, 1916, came a lull, during which the members of the party were engaged on other Unit work. The Laboratories were satisfied that the search for typhoid " carriers " had been concluded and that the state of civilian health generally was good. In April, however, all of Dr. Dewulf's staff except one were called up for service in the Congo, and as it was felt that a constant patrol of the whole area was necessary, the Search Party reassembled at the end of the month. It was arranged that the one Belgian inspector left should visit the area north of the Ypres—Poperinghe—Abeele railway, and that the remaining portion to the south should be allotted to the Search Party. Reports from this time onwards were sent direct to Dr. Dewulf.

A preliminary search conducted over a considerable portion of the whole area during the first half of May showed that there was practically no infectious illness among the civilian population. With the object of maintaining this satisfactory state of affairs, a sanitary campaign was undertaken, especially with a view to inducing the civilians if possible to prevent the breeding of flies and mosquitoes during the hot weather. A pamphlet was prepared explaining the danger of infection through such insects, and the method of reducing their numbers. The importance of good sanitation generally was also urged, and a list of dépôts given where civilians could obtain free issues of various disinfectants such as chloride of lime, creosol, and formol. These dépôts, some of which had existed during the previous year, were now increased to 12 in number and existed in every convenient centre throughout this part of Belgium. The disinfectants were supplied by the Belgian Government through Dr. Dewulf; the pamphlet was translated into Flemish, and 5,000 copies were printed through the assistance of the D.M.S. of the Second Army.

At the end of May, 1916, the Search Party, which about this time assumed the more explanatory title of "The Civilian Health and Sanitary Section," moved its headquarters from the Parc St. Georges, Poperinghe, to a farm near Boeschepe. The former billet was becoming more and more subjected to bombardment, and the retirement of the Unit from the Château Elisabeth Hospital and the departure of the motor repair section to Steenvoorde, removed any reason there might have been for its remaining there. Soon after they had gone to Boeschepe the Unit retired from all other civilian work in Belgium, and the Search Party, with the exception of a few minor activities started at the end of 1916, remained the sole representative of the Unit's civilian work until the opening of the second great period in the spring of 1918. The main reason for the Search Party's remaining when the rest of the work was handed over to the Belgians was its close connection with the medical authorities of the Second Army. Work which was performed as much in the interest of the health of the Army as of the civilians could not easily be handed over to Belgian workers, and whatever doubts the searchers may have had about the necessity for their

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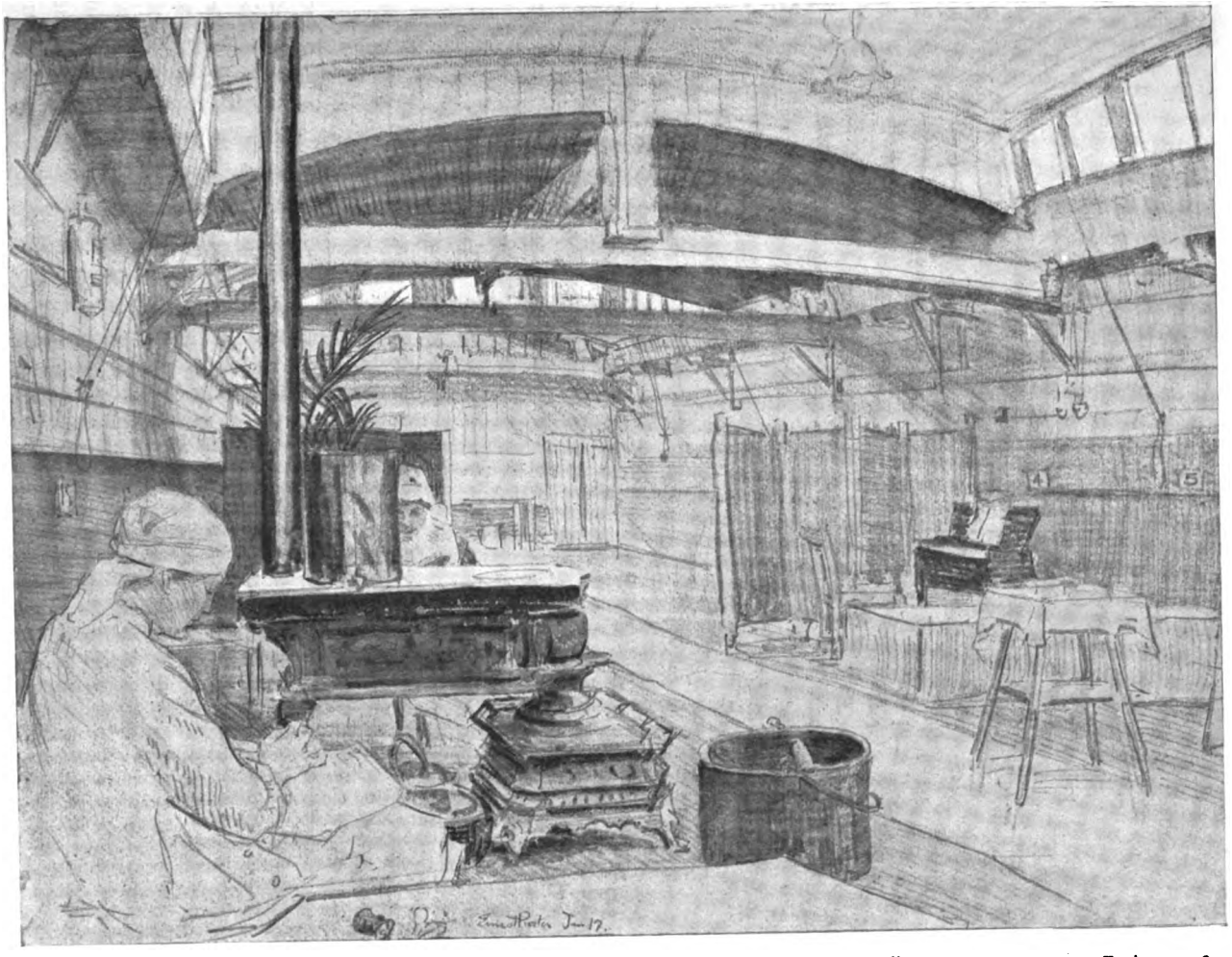

Plate X

HOSPITAL BARGE "NOTRE DAME DE PERPETUEL SECOURS."

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continuance after the other civilian sections had retired, were dispelled by the request of the D.M.S. that the party should not disband.

Throughout the summer of 1916, the sanitary campaign was continued, but very little infectious illness was discovered; the number of cases reported from May 1st to September 22nd amounted only to 40. The total figures from the date of the formation of the second Search Party (July 16th, 1915) down to November 18th, 1916, showed 18,131 houses visited, 742 reported as infectious or insanitary, and sanitary instruction given on 2,847 occasions.

At the beginning of 1917 the area occupied by the British to the north of the Abeele—Poperinghe—Vlamertinghe road was added, owing to the withdrawal of the Belgian inspector who had patrolled it. Throughout the winter special attention was paid to the sanitation of those refugee wooden dwellings which had sprung up in such profusion near the frontier, the improvements that were effected by the owners as the result of advice and instruction given being on the whole satisfactory.

The life of the Search Party had now settled down to an uneventful and indeed rather monotonous routine. Each of the searchers, who at this time numbered four, now had a large area allotted to him which he patrolled month after month. The cases of infectious diseases discovered were remarkably few. Seven months of searching, between November, 1916, and June, 1917, discovered only thirty cases. It may have been some consolation to think that the elimination of typhoid "carriers," the early notification of illness, and the sanitary campaign had contributed towards this desirable state of affairs, but none the less these long days of tramping the familiar roads, inspecting farms and houses no less familiar, and wading through the thick Flanders mud must often have been wearisome.

Thus the uneventful existence at Boeschepe ran its course through 1917 and the spring of 1918, when the sudden German advance south of Hazebrouck and the subsequent capture of Kemmel, Locre, Dranoutre and Neuve Eglise denuded of civilians about half the area of the Search Party's activities. This, however, did not mean a corresponding diminution of work, for a flood of refugees poured northwards and further congested the already crowded area north of Poperinghe. The billet at Boeschepe was not only too far south for convenience but also lay within easy range of German guns; a move was consequently made soon after the middle of April, and a new dwelling was found in some Army huts in the village of Herzeele. The work from this new centre continued throughout the spring and summer of 1918. It brought, however, some change from the old routine, for besides their main duties the searchers co-operated to some extent with the new evacuation sections of the Unit, described more fully in later pages. There was sufficient interval however between the German advance in the early spring and the Allied advance in the autumn to allow conditions to become fairly normal after the first flood of refugees had subsided, so that the Search Party was soon able to confine itself again entirely to its inspection work. Unfortunately the system of supply of

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disinfectants previously arranged through the Belgian *Service de Santé*, had broken down, and pamphlets on sanitation intended for distribution in the summer were not ready until too late; nevertheless, the fears that had been entertained that the overcrowding of the district would give rise to epidemics were not fulfilled, and as soon as the area had been thoroughly investigated the Search Party was left with comparatively little to do throughout the summer months. Early in September, its headquarters were moved to more conveniently situated billets in the main street of Rousbrugge.

The Allied advance in the autumn and the liberation of inhabited territory beyond Ypres caused a sudden influx of refugees from the new battle area, and the Search Party had again to undertake work outside their normal sphere. In this, their acquaintance with local Belgian authorities and their knowledge of the district proved of particular value. Assistance was given at refugee camps, particularly in the preparation of a hospice at Poperinghe, to receive these refugees, among whom the lack of proper accommodation and the prevalence of the influenza epidemic gave rise to pitiable conditions.

But it soon became clear that the Party was more urgently needed elsewhere. As the advance continued and the tide of battle swept quickly on over broad tracts of populated country, leaving them free from immediate danger, the flow of refugees westward gradually ceased. An entire new field for the Search Party and other civilian work was suddenly opened up, and the schemes which had been prepared so long ago for "the great advance" could now be put into operation. It can readily be imagined that the condition of these newly liberated civilians gave rise to some anxiety in the minds of those responsible for the health of the troops; however rigorous German methods to ensure the immunity from infectious illness might have been, it was certain that four years of distress and underfeeding would leave them an easy prey to sickness. In any case a rapid survey of the situation was essential, both in order to find out for the Army medical authorities what diseases, if any, were prevalent, and also to provide information to the hospital and evacuation sections of the Unit which were now moving forward. Consequently, towards the end of October, the Search Party took up its quarters a few miles to the south of Courtrai, where it was in the midst of the most densely populated area of the reconquered territory and near the newly established civilian hospital in Courtrai itself. A house-to-house search in this region, where there was so much to be done at the earliest possible moment, was out of the question; the main centres of illness or distress were discovered by enquiries from local civilian authorities, and a great deal of information was collected in a short space of time. In this work there was co-operation with the members of the French Civilian Relief Section, who had moved forward to Tournai, and the Unit's headquarters were kept supplied with reports of the necessities, particularly in the matter of medical stores and drugs, which were most urgently required.

The Unit received at this time an urgent request from the Belgian *Service de Santé* for the provision of searchers to work in the area to the north, that is

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to say the area occupied by the Belgian Army. Every effort was made to comply with this request, but the needs in the Courtrai area for transport, hospital and relief work generally were so great that all the Unit's resources in men and material were concentrated there, and it was found impossible to provide the personnel required.

Of the remaining work of the Search Party there is little to tell. After the Armistice the concentration of troops in the area became less, and the need for working on behalf of the medical authorities diminished. More and more attention was paid to investigating conditions of distress, until it was felt that the committees formed by the Belgians themselves needed no further assistance. On January 7th, 1919, after almost continuous work for three and a half years, the second Search Party was disbanded.

The Belgian Civilian Ambulance Section.

The Belgian Civilian Ambulance Section was, perhaps, less imposing in fact than in name, for it consisted only of two ambulance cars attached to the Belgian Maternity Hospital, at Rousbrugge (and later elsewhere). But its title dated from a time when, with the exception of the Search Party, the Unit had no other civilian ambulance work going forward in Belgian territory. These cars were first stationed there early in December, 1916, at the request of the Belgian Minister of the Interior. The drivers were under the orders of the *Médecin Directeur* of the hospital, Dr. Ghysens, in whose house they were billeted. The area they covered was the whole of unoccupied Belgium, which often involved long journeys. Most of the cases carried were brought from houses and farms near the line, where ordinary medical assistance was not available and mothers could not be attended in their own homes. Monotonous the work may have been, but it was worth doing; not a few Belgian children must owe their lives to the fact that they entered this world under proper medical care and not in a half-destroyed house in some bombarded village.

But the career of this small section scarcely calls for a long description. When Rousbrugge became liable to bombardment in the spring of 1918, the institution was removed further north to Leysele, the transference being carried out on April 29th with the help of the " ravitaillement " lorries then at Rousbrugge. In September, 1918, however, the Leysele hospital was partially wrecked by bombs. Fortunately only three of the patients were wounded, but the material damage was considerable, and during the night all the patients were removed to the Civil Hospital at Doorntje, where the hospital was again installed the next day at the Colonie Scolaire. There the cars remained till they were finally withdrawn on January 15th, 1919.

The French Civilian Evacuation Section (later the French Civilian Relief Section).

In describing the evacuation of civilians from towns and villages in Belgium during 1915 and 1916, it was mentioned that after the cessation of this work

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in the spring of 1916, a fresh start was made in the autumn, though on a smaller scale, in the adjacent corner of France, when cars were sent to carry out two evacuations from Armentières. From this small beginning there slowly grew up the extensive work which in time was organised under the French Civilian Evacuation Section. These early evacuations from French territory were undertaken at the request of Madame Liouville, the devoted Directrice of an organisation known as the " Oeuvre des Enfants de la Lys." It was the aim of this body to rescue children from the dangerously-situated industrial towns in the valley of the river Lys, and to board them out in farms and private houses in the safer countryside behind Hazebrouck. The necessity of such work could not be better summarised than in Mme. Liouville's own words from an appeal for funds to supplement the inadequate Government allowance for the upkeep of these children. " In the valley of the Lys, and particularly in the town of Armentières, there are still living many civilians who are in daily danger of wounds and death. What are they to do? Desert their homes, their friends, and join the great army of refugees—people without a home, living on charity, wandering strangers? On the contrary, they bravely stick to their own work and their homes, despite bombardment so spasmodic and so swift that it can never be foreseen. And with them stay the children, the hope of the future, in cellars and sheds, in half-demolished houses, where everyone carries a gas-helmet. Such are the conditions under which the little ones are growing up." These were indeed the lamentable circumstances in that flat and dreary country-side through which the Lys flows, and it was the difficulty of obtaining adequate motor transport for these children that brought the Unit into touch with the problems thus set forth.

The original system of sending up cars from Dunkirk for the purpose was, however, a wasteful one, in view of the great distance, and on February 7th, 1917, an ambulance was attached to Mme. Liouville's headquarters at Hazebrouck, the Unit contributing as well a monthly sum of 450 francs towards its running costs. Throughout spring and summer these evacuations continued, the total number carried from January to August being 398. One remembers the odd spectacle on these roads crowded with marching troops, batteries on the move, and endless convoys of supply waggons, of the ambulance car packed with small children, each wearing the characteristic tam-o'-shanter with a tricolour cockade, and not too sure of what turn the fortune of war was taking now. Some assistance was given by the Unit driver in the distribution of clothing, sent from England by Lady Newman, and in making payments to the families with whom the children were lodged. A second driver was attached in the late autumn, and a good deal of secretarial work on behalf of the " Oeuvre " was also undertaken.

Meanwhile a children's colony was being established at Ebblinghem, on the Hazebrouck—St. Omer railway, a site being chosen on the hill lying to the north of the village. Sheds provided by the French and Belgian Governments were erected during the autumn, the colony being primarily intended for housing about 100 children, to be evacuated from Nieppe. Towards the end of the year

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the sheds were ready, and Mme. Liouville, her French staff, and the F.A.U. drivers now made Ebblinghem their centre. By the beginning of 1918 there was the full complement of 122 children installed in the colony, and a school was carried on under seven Sisters and Postulates of the Sainte Union. The usual evacuations were meantime proceeding as before.

But not many weeks of the new year had passed before it was clear that the Lys front was likely to be more active than for a long time past. The continued shelling by the Germans of back areas was the first sign of their great offensive which was to follow. Hazebrouck itself, as well as Estaires, Sailly-sur-Lys, Erquinghem, La Gorgue and other smaller places, were the targets for the enemy's long-range guns, and it was seen that the Unit's help might be needed in more than the regular straightforward evacuations hitherto carried out. At the end of February an ambulance and driver were detached and stationed at Hazebrouck, at the disposal of the Abbé Lemire, the Mayor of the town and one of the Deputies for the Département du Nord. By this means it was easier to keep in touch, not only with the current work of evacuation, but also with the possible needs for the near future. Hazebrouck, in those days, was a town of suspense and apprehension, and all the Lys valley towns seemed to be under a very menacing cloud. Throughout March there was a crescendo of bombardment along the front, and it was necessary to station four ambulances at the Hazebrouck Hospice. During the last fortnight of that month, 238 civilian cases were carried, mainly from Bailleul, Armentières, and the other towns on the river. The orphanage at Bailleul was cleared with the aid of a 3-ton lorry, and an ambulance for local civilian needs was placed at the disposal of the Town Major there.

April opened with a further expansion of the section's activities; one car was placed at the disposal of the Town Major at Estaires, another attached to the large asylum near Bailleul. The headquarters of the section as now formed was at Hazebrouck, where it was possible to keep in close touch with the Commandants of forward areas with the valuable help of the Town Major, and with the French civil authorities through the local Commissaire of Police.

Such was the position when, on April 9th, the Germans delivered their great blow near Armentières, and broke through the old front that had run to the east of that stricken town with few fluctuations for over three years. From the Unit's point of view this advance on the Lys front created a situation which recalled that of the early civilian work in the Ypres salient. The plight of the population was no less disastrous, and the work done, small though it was in comparison with the magnitude of the catastrophe, was no less exciting. As many cars and drivers as could be spared were sent up from Dunkirk to strengthen the section's resources. The days following the break-through at Armentières were crowded ones indeed, and cars were kept running almost continually day and night. From the asylum, near Bailleul, 1,300 mental cases were taken to the station for entrainment, the remainder with the staff being conveyed by road as far away as Berck-sur-Mer. Casualties were numerous

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in heavily-shelled centres like Estaires and Merville, and many were collected. Hazebrouck, meantime, seemed to be a doomed town, with the British divisions falling steadily back towards it, and the sick and wounded from the Hospice were transported to the civil hospital at St. Omer. On the morning of the 10th, casualties were brought down from Nieppe and Steenwerck, which were on the point of being overwhelmed by the advancing tide, which daily was swallowing up towns and villages where life only a few days before had been going on normally. From these places it was found possible to rescue the papers and money of the local post-offices. On that same afternoon, at the request of the Sous-Préfet of Hazebrouck, a final expedition was made to Nieppe, where the Hospice still remained to be finally cleared. The five cars, with a motor-bicycle and side-car, pushed their way with great difficulty through the congested traffic of the retreating British line, but so slowly were they able to proceed through the mass of troops, guns, lorries, stragglers, and refugees, all streaming in the opposite direction, that they did not reach the Hospice corner until the advance guards of the enemy were crossing the Lys at the far end of the town. The cars, however, were loaded up with no fewer than fifteen wounded on each, soldiers and civilians together, and two more were even packed into the side-car of the motor-bicycle—the last of a long series of evacuations from Nieppe. That night, too, there were still more wounded civilians to remove from Hazebrouck.

During the next few days cars were put at the disposal of the Area Commandant of Strazeele and were running continuously with helpless refugees to the concentration camp at Ebblinghem. At Bailleul meantime a car remained with the Town Major until he finally left the town, not before the Germans had reached its outlying streets. The remaining ambulances were employed in collecting and conveying to the railhead the 300 children for whom Mme. Liouville's colony was responsible. When the last of the civilians unable to escape unaided had been removed from Hazebrouck, the instruments, dressings, and medical stores were rescued from the Hospice there, and brought down the road to Ebblinghem, where it was now possible to transform the children's colony into a sorely-needed hospital for civilian patients. For meantime there had been gathering at Ebblinghem railhead a great mass of refugees, many old and infirm, and including many sick and maternity cases.

After the evacuation of Hazebrouck three members of the section, along with four R.A.M.C. orderlies, lent by the C.O. of an Employment Company, set up an emergency dressing-station in the operating-room of the Hospice to help to deal with the endless stream of military cases that was pouring through the abandoned town. During the night of the 12th and 13th, more than 200 cases passed through this station, the cars taking them on to No. 15 C.C.S. near Ebblinghem, or on to hospitals at St. Omer. Other temporary dressing-stations were established on main roads near Hazebrouck and were able to give assistance to many wounded men. Activities such as these were, of course, extraneous to the section's main work, and in times of "normal" warfare would not have been expected, but during such days as these of confusion and

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sudden crisis there could be no doubt that even the smallest amount of help was urgently needed, and so, to the best of the section's ability, it was given.

At Ebblinghem, meanwhile, the hospital was soon in working order, its nature being approximately that of a clearing station for civilian patients, who were brought there from the refugee *triage* and evacuated when ready to the railhead to the trains for the interior. For their greatly expanded work the section had received fresh reinforcements both in cars and staff from the Unit's Headquarters. With the sanction of the D.M.S. of the Second Army, ambulances were able to help in the transport of military cases and medical stores for No. 15 C.C.S. Between April 14th and 20th, 350 civilian and 170 military patients were carried, quantities of medical stores were salved from Hazebrouck and other places, and several tons of civilian foodstuffs were brought into safety. The hospital at Ebblinghem remained open till the middle of June, by which date the early pressure had, of course, diminished.

By the end of April the German advance, in that direction at any rate, had been checked, though it was not for many weeks that the danger of a further sweep over the undamaged villages and fields between Hazebrouck and the coast was finally averted. It was then seen that Ebblinghem was not to be a convenient road-centre for the future work of the ambulances, and the section was removed to the farm of the Château Rouge at Oxelaere, a small hamlet lying at the foot of Cassel hill. This was probably one of the most attractive of all the Unit's out-stations, and there the section was to remain till the autumn. This marked a stage when the work was put on a more regularly organised basis than had been possible during the hurrying events of April. As the new front became stable, the flow of refugees dwindled, but meanwhile a new belt of country containing villages and towns previously well out of the danger zone was brought within the range of enemy fire. It was foreseen that there would in all likelihood be work for ambulances and men in this strip of territory. A statement was furnished to the D.M.S. of the Second Army of the strength and transport resources of the section, and through his action the availability of its services was made known to all medical units concerned. Town Majors and Area Commandants and other officials in touch with civilian problems were notified, and there was, of course, close liaison with the French local authorities as well. An office was set up in Cassel itself, and so, with the valuable help of the French Mission, the section was able to deal with requests for help from all parts of the Second Army area on the French side of the frontier.

Many and varied indeed these requests were. There were the usual casualties, though happily these became fewer as time went on. There were cases to be conveyed to civil hospitals for whom no other transport was available. There were refugees, singly or in families, from dangerous villages or exposed farms. And with the aid of two or three heavy lorries, large quantities of civilian property, mainly house furniture, were salved from abandoned homes near the new front and deposited in safer places. Strange cargoes these often were that came down the roads in the section's lorries and box-cars; vast

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wardrobes, unwieldy feather-beds, tables and chairs, pictures and gilt-framed mirrors, bags of coal, sacks of potatoes, goats and rabbits, and (once at least) the accumulated *paperasse* of seventy years from a country lawyer's office. Some church property also was salved, notably the carved woodwork, pictures, and parish registers of Boeschepe. This work went on in great variety right through the summer months, with Oxelaere as its headquarters. At Steenvoorde, an important centre on the main road to Poperinghe, there was an interesting off-shoot of the section in a small civilian dressing-station set up in May owing to the frequent bombardment of the village. It was situated at first under canvas in a roadside garden just outside the village, but this proved too exposed a site, and the Town Major found a safer place for its activities in the cellars of a large house nearer the centre of the village. An ambulance was attached to it, and it remained open, treating a considerable number of civilian casualties, and occasional French and British military as well, until early in September. A car was also attached for civilian purposes to the Town Major at Hazebrouck, and another to the new refugee camp established by the Army at Lumbres, in the hilly country beyond St. Omer. During August the number of patients carried was falling considerably, and it was seen that the main work of the Evacuation Section was over for the time being. But much had been accomplished during these past four or five months, and it was a fitting tribute to the Section's work when its leader, J. C. N. Eppstein, was decorated with the *Croix de Guerre* by the head of the French Mission.

But a change in the section's plans was made to meet the changing conditions in its area of work. By the beginning of September the military situation seemed so far hopeful that schemes were set on foot by the French authorities for resettling selected civilians in the devastated area between Hazebrouck, St. Venant, Caestre, and Flètre with a view to getting the abandoned land once more under cultivation. The Unit was approached by the Sous-Préfet of Hazebrouck and asked to give assistance in the transport and erection of hut sections to be used as hostels for the returning workers, and to supervise their management when completed. Co-operation in the scheme was decided upon, and on September 17th a pioneer detachment from Oxelaere was stationed on the site of some ruined farm-buildings in the outskirts of Caestre, to which the sections of three huts were transported. With this fresh direction of activities the section's title was changed to the more appropriate "French Civilian Relief Section."

But the scheme described never reached maturity, for the Germans were seen to be relaxing their hold on their gains of the spring, and information received showed that the Second Army had every expectation of freeing large portions of occupied France before many weeks had passed. The possibility of a German withdrawal to a line behind the great industrial centres of Lille, Roubaix, and Tourcoing was indeed a vast problem from the point of view of civilian needs, and the Unit, of course, could not hope to do more than fit its slender resources of staff and transport into the scheme which the Army was already formulating to meet the anticipated difficulties. A plan was accordingly

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Plate XI CIVILIAN HOSPITAL EVACUATION, BETHUNE. Facing p. 56

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drawn up towards the end of September with the medical authorities of the Second Army; 12 ambulances and light lorries and 3 heavy lorries were to be placed at the disposal of the XV Corps, which, in the event of an advance, would occupy the thickly populated area of Roubaix, Tourcoing, and their extensive suburbs. These cars would be allocated to Advanced and Main Dressing Stations in order that any civilian casualties occurring during the advance might be dealt with as speedily as possible. The Caestre station was accordingly closed down, and the main body of the cars stationed to await the opening of operations at Flètre. At the same time a hospital was established to which casualties or sick refugees could be brought in the course of the advance. The site chosen was at the disused École St. Jules, on the outskirts of Hazebrouck, and there a small party was stationed on September 29th, a doctor and several orderlies being sent up from Dunkirk a few days later. The offensive in Flanders was begun on the morning of September 29th, and every effort was made to have the hospital ready for use as quickly as possible. Shell-holes in the building were repaired, medical stores sent up from Dunkirk, and stretchers and blankets and much other equipment supplied by the D.D.M.S. of the XV Corps.

But both cars and hospital were ready before the advance in which they were concerned actually took place, and it was not till October 17th that the ambulances attached to the three Divisions of the Corps (14th, 31st, and 40th Divisions) actually moved forward with the Dressing Stations across the desolated zone to the inhabited country beyond. It is interesting to remember that on October 18th two of the Section's cars conveyed a French Ravitaillement Commission to Tourcoing and Roubaix, and being, it is believed, the first cars to enter these towns, received an enthusiastic ovation. But fortunately the advance was not such as had been anticipated in the provision of medical arrangements. If the Germans had fallen back contesting every foot of the ground, or even holding strong points here and there, civilian casualties in that urban area would have been enormous, and the capacity of the Hazebrouck hospital taxed to the utmost. But as events turned out, their retirement was made without constant contact with the pursuing army, and there was no fighting until the Scheldt line was reached. There was no need for the evacuation of patients to Hazebrouck, and, after investigation of local necessities, the staff and equipment from the École St. Jules were moved up to the Civil Hospital in the Rue Nationale, Tourcoing, on October 22nd. There was every likelihood that assistance would be needed there, for not only had the hospital resources of the town been severely requisitioned by the Germans, who had taken off with them nearly all the bedding and equipment, but the new front was being formed along the Scheldt valley, where a line of populous villages was brought into a most dangerous position. Meanwhile the cars had moved forward with the Advanced Dressing Stations of their Divisions, and were finding plenty of work to their hands. Sickness was rife among the ill-nourished inhabitants of the liberated territory, and many cases of typhoid, dysentery, and pneumonia were transported to the civil hospitals, the bulk of this work being done in and around Roubaix. Every effort was made to remove as many

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people as possible from the river-bank villages through which the new front was being formed, though except when shelling was actually going on it was exceedingly difficult to convince these people, overjoyed as they were by their liberation from enemy occupation, that all danger was far from being past, and that the mere presence of friendly troops was no protection against gas or high-explosive. From Pecq, St. Leger, Coyghem, Espierres, and other villages many persons were removed to safety, and in some cases only just in time; for within the last fortnight of the war many of these Scheldt villages found themselves freed only to be ruined by further fighting.

The Section's occupation of Tourcoing Hospital was however a short one, partly because it was decided that the French staff could cope fairly adequately with the situation after the initial help had been given, partly because a very urgent need for the Unit's doctor and staff had arisen at Courtrai, owing to circumstances which will be described in the pages dealing with the Belgian Relief Section. A transference to Courtrai was made on October 27th, a dresser and five orderlies being left for a few days to give temporary help to the French staff. Simultaneously, a number of cars were transferred to Courtrai, and the Section was left with only a small part of its former resources. This unfortunate but inevitable reduction in the strength of the Section made it hard to cope with the heavy demands made on it during the next few weeks, for throughout this thickly populated area civilian transport of any kind was almost non-existent. The Second Army battle front now lay entirely on Belgian soil, which robbed the Section of its old title, but did not prevent its work being carried on as before. On November 1st its centre was moved from a large disused spinning mill in Tourcoing to a roadside estaminet near Estaimpuis, just behind the Scheldt villages which the cars attached to the Dressing Stations were serving. From these work was continued steadily till some weeks after the Armistice; apart from casualties by gas and shell-fire, there were numerous civilian sick to be collected, and liberated civilian prisoners of war in bad health were frequently picked up. Early in December the section regretfully severed its connection with the XV Corps, in order to move to Tournai, where it took up its last quarters as a part of the now extensive relief measures being undertaken by the Belgian Relief Section and described under that heading. In that town, with billets more "civilised" than it had known for a long time back, it remained at work until demobilised early in February, 1919.

The Belgian Civilian Evacuation Section (later the Belgian Civilian Relief Section.)

The German advance in the north in the spring of 1918, had a less disastrous effect on the civil population of Belgium than it had in the adjacent corner of France. The first surprise attack came south of Armentières, and the subsequent advance over the Messines ridge through Neuve Eglise and Kemmel was made at a more gradual pace and after longer warning. Consequently the Belgian Civilian Evacuation Section, which was the counterpart of the French Civilian Section described in the previous pages, started its

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career on a smaller scale and under rather less dramatic circumstances. Nevertheless a very considerable flood of refugees poured northwards from the newly-invaded territory, and transport necessary for the wounded and infirm was badly needed.

Installed at the Château Couthove near Proven, the civilian hospital transferred from Poperinghe after the Unit's departure in 1916, was still in existence. It was under the care of the Countess van den Steen, who had a certain number of ambulances at her disposal. But these were inadequate to meet this new situation, and accordingly after consultation with Lieutenant Carlier, the officer in charge of the *Parc Automobile* of the Minister of the Interior, two ambulances were, on April 22nd, stationed at Watou. They were under the direction of M. Biebuyck, the Commissaire of the Arrondissement of Ypres, the general arrangement being that Lieutenant Carlier should use what transport he already had for the needs of the district nearer the coast, while the Unit cars served the southern portion. The two ambulances were for a short time reinforced by two others, while three lorries were placed at the disposal of M. Maes, the Belgian official in charge of " ravitaillement," for the distribution of foodstuffs throughout the area, and for the salvage of those which had been abandoned in such places as Poperinghe, Reninghelst and Westoutre. For a few days also at the beginning of May the Unit supplied a superintendent, cook and orderly for a refugee camp established near Rousbrugge, from which trainloads of refugees were despatched into France. In all this work assistance was given by the Search Party, which was then stationed at Herzeele.

The work of transporting refugees never at this period assumed large proportions; large numbers were soon got away into France by train and the rest settled down in the area between Watou and Rousbrugge. The bulk of the work during the spring fell on the " ravitaillement " lorries, which often had exciting experiences in going through the now deserted town of Poperinghe and to the villages beyond. " Les camions que vous avez envoyés font excellent service et je n'ai qu'à me louer du dévouement de votre personnel qui mérite vraiment tous les éloges "—such was the courteous expression of M. Maes' appreciation. During June, to take some figures which illustrate the extent of this work, 125 tons of foodstuffs were distributed to inhabited communes and 246 tons moved back from deserted villages and farms. During this month also help was given in the establishment of a refugee camp near the coast at Adinkerke, though fortunately the need for using it never actually arose.

Towards the end of June it was possible to reduce the section's transport to one ambulance and two heavy lorries. Thus, with additional assistance from Dunkirk as occasion demanded, the work continued during the summer. In addition to the salvage of food, the lorries were often called on to remove to safety church valuables, school furniture and household goods. An ambulance remained at Watou during the partial evacuation of that place in order to deal with such civilian casualties as might arise, until by the end of August, this danger had passed. But before it left it was able to bring back to their homes

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a number of old people who had been temporarily and inadequately housed elsewhere.

In September, as in the case of the French Civilian Section, its title was changed to the Belgian Civilian Relief Section. It may perhaps be wondered why two bodies with functions so similar in adjoining tracts of country were not combined, but, though in many respects this would have been a desirable development, it could not have been easily carried out; for much of the work of each was planned in conjunction with quite distinct local authorities, and the complication of reconciling Belgian and French methods of administration would have been a very real difficulty. Refugees and casualties were the same whatever their nationality might be, but the frontier line divided two systems of organisation.

The German retirement in the autumn brought to this Section its period of fullest activity. As the line moved forward over the districts of Menin, Roulers, Thielt, and Courtrai, a host of refugees began to stream westwards across that zone of hideous desolation; though liberated from the enemy's occupation they had found themselves endangered by the stiff fighting which went on during these days of gradual advance, and, often in a pitiable physical state, made their way through the advancing British lines towards Ypres. Towards the end of September then, when the northern offensive was begun, two ambulances and a motor-bicycle were sent up to Ypres, the drivers being housed in a cellar among a wilderness of ruins, and a day or two later four ambulances were stationed at Poperinghe. All found a full measure of work before them, the Ypres cars collecting refugees who had been sent down by light-railway to Brielen, those at Poperinghe dealing with the large trainloads which arrived there from beyond Ypres. The Army had rendered as much help as it could to these wanderers by giving them where possible transport facilities out of the bewildering belt of desert country through which they were making their way down to the populated areas behind the old front. At the same time other ambulances went forward to evacuate the sick and infirm from the civilian camp established at Ledeghem and from the dressing-stations beyond, while the " ravitaillement " lorries were running fully laden with food supplies for these thousands of resourceless people. Over such roads as existed in those first days across that shattered tract of ground, driving was slow and exacting work for all motor transport, and the bad weather reduced the shelled and mined roadways to a lamentable morass.

At Poperinghe meanwhile a pitiable state of affairs existed among the crowds of refugees who had congregated there. The damaged town could not provide proper accommodation for so many, and the prevalence of pneumonia and influenza among them made things worse. Such assistance as could be spared was given at the College, and at a building near the station which had been prepared to receive refugees. But more than this was necessary, and on October 27th a hospital was opened in a convent in the Rue d'Elverdinghe. A doctor lent to the Unit by the American Red Cross was placed in charge, and the Unit provided a secretary, orderlies, large quantities of equipment

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drugs and stores, and two ambulances were attached. Four nuns and some local women also gave their assistance. During its first week, the hospital received 34 patients, but as the influx of refugees abated, and as there was a much more pressing call for help at Courtrai, the management was gradually left to the Belgians themselves, a local doctor being found who could pay daily visits, though an ambulance and orderly remained there for some weeks.

But all eyes were now turning to the urgent problems of the condition of the population in those territories which the Allied advance was now liberating. Almost everywhere their situation was one of grave distress. The regularity of such meagre supplies of food as the people had hitherto received was now threatened by a temporary dislocation from two directions; from the one by the new front which was running across their old line of supply, from the other by the disorganisation of communications caused by the systematic destruction of roads, railways, bridges, and canals. The Armies helped to ease the situation by supplying great quantities of foodstuffs, but they had difficulty enough in maintaining their own supplies with their lengthened lines of communication not yet developed. In town and country alike, sickness was widespread; the influenza epidemic found easy victims in the ill-nourished people of these thickly populated parts. In some areas again there was the tragic spectacle of fresh villages and towns being drawn into the vortex of war by the settling down of a new battle-front. The attention of the Unit's authorities was drawn to Courtrai as a centre from which some measure of help in this emergency could best be given. It certainly opened up a district where all these elements of distress were only too apparent.

With the prevalence of sickness and rush of civilian casualties, the existing hospitals at Courtrai found themselves overcrowded, understaffed, and lacking in many of the necessities of medical treatment. To relieve the pressure, the Unit took over, towards the end of October, a portion of a large building in Courtrai known as the Ambulance du Fort, hitherto used by the Germans as a military hospital but now empty except for the sisters of a religious order, who occupied one wing. To this place, spacious but rather bare, the doctor and most of the staff, with some equipment, were transferred from Tourcoing Civil Hospital on October 27th, as has already been described.

They had scarcely arrived at the Ambulance du Fort when they were faced by a really terrible situation. The German artillery had poured a large number of gas-shells into the village of Avelghem and neighbouring places with appalling results to the civilians remaining there. The greater number, unaware of the danger they ran, instinctively sought safety by descending to the cellars, where they remained all night amid the penetrating gas fumes. It was impossible to rescue many till next day, but throughout the 28th the Unit cars with many Army lorries and ambulances brought down load after load of these unfortunate people to the hospital, and indeed for several days afterwards sufferers continued to straggle in. In a few hours the long empty wards were crowded with stretchers. There were far more than the staff could possibly deal with unaided, and

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fortunately Army doctors and orderlies were able to come to assist the hospital's personnel. In the whole history of the Unit's experience of the civilian side of war, there can have been few sights more heartrending than that of the Ambulance du Fort during these days: the high bleak wards filled with stretchers, literally to overflowing (for they lay in the corridors as well), old men, women and little children, tortured and scorched and choking, their blinded eyes bandaged up, their lungs torn by the pitiless fumes; and outside in the courtyard a seething crowd of anxious folk seeking their lost relatives or their dead, and from time to time an ambulance pushing its way through with yet another load for these crowded wards inside. During the first days accurate records could not be kept, but certainly over 250 cases were admitted on the 28th, and during the first ten days the deaths reached the total of 178, of which 130 were due to gas-poisoning, the remainder to wounds or sickness.

When the worst was over, the R.A.M.C. doctors and orderlies were withdrawn. With the aid of Belgian nuns and other local assistance the chaos was reduced to order; stretchers were replaced by beds, other necessary equipment was obtained, and again through the help of the American Red Cross a second doctor was provided.

In the meantime there had been a steady concentration of the Unit's cars in the district of which Courtrai was the natural centre. Practically all the transport for civilian hospital, relief and "ravitaillement" work had by now moved forward beyond the devastated zone, as well as the ambulances belonging to the F.U. Groupement. Preparations were made to move at least a portion of the Unit's Headquarters from Dunkirk up to Courtrai, owing to the difficuance of administration from so far away and the probability of a further Allied advanee towards Brussels. This move was never actually made owing to the signing of the Armistice, but a preliminary step towards it was taken by the transference of some of the headquarters garage staff and equipment to an empty factory in Courtrai, which formed the base for all the transport work in the district. Transport resources were further strengthened by the transference of one heavy lorry, three ambulances, two light lorries and the workshop car from the French Civilian Relief Section at Tourcoing. The cars were in plentiful demand for the carrying of sick and refugees and infirm *rapatriés* all over the country round Courtrai, Audenarde and Iseghem.

With the signing of the Armistice came a considerable reduction in the work of the Courtrai hospital. There were no further civilian casualties from gas poisonings or wounds, and though a number of severe cases from these causes remained under treatment, and despite the prevalence of influenza, pneumonia, diphtheria and other illnesses, the numbers gradually fell from 205 on November 9th to 99 on December 7th. The attention of the Section was now mainly turned to the relief of general distress, and with the assistance of the Search Party, which was stationed near Courtrai, investigations were conducted over the Courtrai area.

The scope of both transport and investigation work was extended when the members of the French Civilian Relief Section joined in it as a southern

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branch stationed at Tournai, after their activities in the XV Corps area had ceased. With their five ambulances the transport of sick and refugees was carried on in the area of Tournai, Renaix, Ath, and Peruwelz, and, over the frontier, in the country between Lille and Douai. Thus, between the northern and southern branches of the Section and the " ravitaillement " lorries now at Audenarde, a wide tract was being covered by the cars, though so few could not do more than skim the surface of a great reservoir of work. But it was also possible to investigate the more pressing needs of the civilian population during this period of transition. The Unit's workers were in close touch with the existing organisations throughout the area, such as the Commission for Relief in Belgium and the Regional Committees of Ravitaillement. Some of the most pressing wants thus discovered, especially drugs and medical stores, the Unit was itself able to supply; others, such as food and clothing furnished by the American Red Cross, the Unit was able to distribute. The chief contribution which the Unit could offer was transport, and this was particularly valuable at a time when the railways were still disorganised and horses for civilian needs unobtainable. The calls on the cars, in fact, were so great that only a small proportion of the demands could be met.

The month of December, 1918, saw the beginning of the Unit's retirement from these fields, acting on the principle that such work should only be done when the Belgians themselves were unable to do it. Civilian doctors were now returning, and disorganised hospitals were being equipped; with conditions of life more settled Belgian committees were more able to arrange the distribution of relief themselves; trains were becoming available for returning refugees, and municipal authorities were beginning to obtain their own transport. Accordingly notification was given to the authorities concerned that the Unit would close its temporary hospital at Courtrai in January, and the gradual transference of patients to other institutions in the town started early in the new year. By January 16th all but six infectious patients had been transferred, and shortly afterwards the building was closed as a hospital. A total of 710 patients had been treated in the Ambulance du Fort in about two and a half months, but the figures can give little idea of the work performed. The Unit's last hospital served perhaps a greater and more urgent need than any since the Sacré Cœur at Ypres.

The closing down of the transport work was a slower process, for demands for cars continued to pour in. But though these ambulances and lorries might have found work of secondary importance to do for a long time ahead, the essential services were now being undertaken by the Belgian authorities. During January a number of Courtrai cars were withdrawn, and those at Tournai followed early in February. The hard usage and strange roads of the past few months however had left some casualties on the hands of the garage staff at Courtrai, who remained there for some time longer to put these *éclopés* on the road again. On February 15th the last men and cars returned to Dunkirk, and with this the civilian work of the Friends' Ambulance Unit, after more than four years' unbroken existence, came to an end.

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Conclusion.

The civilian work, the story of which has now been told, was in many ways the most interesting of the Unit's many activities. It has been possible in these pages to give little more than a bare record of work undertaken and the means employed to carry it out. But it may easily be imagined how much lay behind the daily round of hospital life or motor work in the distinctive setting of all these Sections' varied functions. Not a few who took part in them came to have more than a passing interest in the lives of the people with whom they were thus brought into contact, and learned perhaps to know more intimately than most, the wealth of character that lies under the stolid and often forbidding surface of the Fleming.

And to many members of the Unit abroad, as well as to many of its supporters at home, this work made a stronger appeal than any of its branches more closely connected with the actual course of the war. There were, indeed, those who felt that it offered almost the only path of service which they could conscientiously tread, and to many such it must have seemed more than mere chance that provided an opportunity which their principles so peculiarly fitted them to follow up with the requisite energy and devotion.

For, looking back at this story, long as such stories go, it was by chance rather than by design that the Unit put their hands to this work. It formed no part of the original programme of 1914, and when its pioneers at Woesten stumbled upon it in the course of their other work, they can scarcely have imagined how important the sequel was to be in the development of the Unit. Yet it was a very real and a very pressing necessity which they were opening up, and if the Unit had not been in that particular part of the war-zone, there might well have been no other organisation ready to undertake so much. The region round Ypres and Poperinghe was by no means the only area behind the long-stretched battle-front where civilian distress was acute; but probably there was no sickness elsewhere to compare with the typhoid epidemic there in 1915, and certainly there were few parts where military activity, taken over the whole length of the war, was more constant and intense than in that corner of Belgium. The whole situation was complicated by the narrowness of the strip of territory left to the inhabitants of this unlucky district; for, as we have seen, the Belgian was naturally and deeply reluctant to go over as a refugee into foreign France, and for this reason either clung with pathetic tenacity to a dangerously-exposed home as near the front as he was allowed, or else retreated a few miles to swell the congested population just within the frontier. The need for help here as elsewhere, always came most urgently when military activity was most marked, and the British Army could hardly have spared more assistance to civilians than it actually did. The resources of the Belgians themselves, on the other hand, especially in the early days of the war, were too slender to allow them to provide either the men, the cars, or the material which the Unit had at its disposal. It was a peculiarly fortunate turn of events which brought the Unit into a position where it was able to help to the utmost of its limited resources this isolated slip of Belgium.

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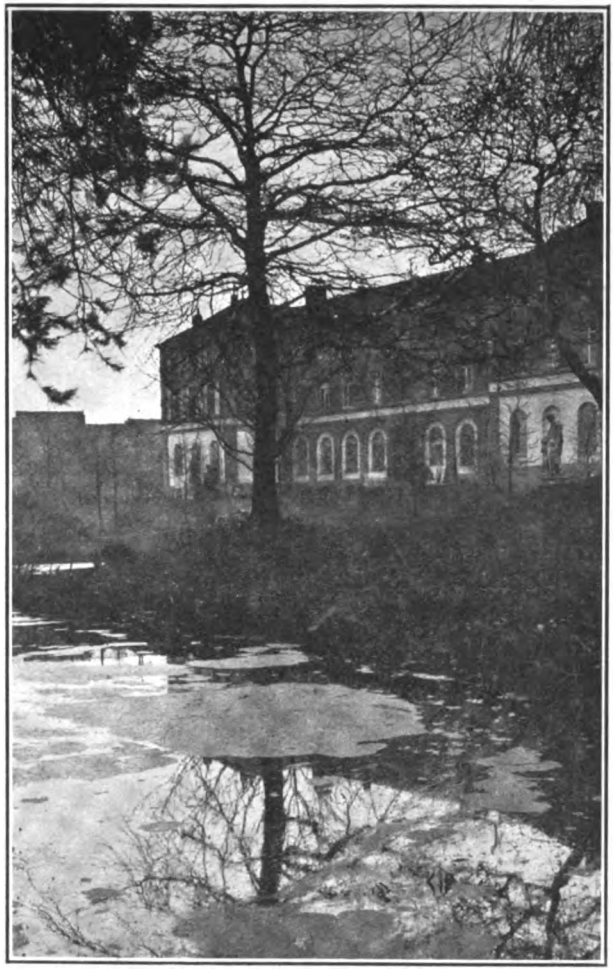

Plate XII
Facing p. 64

THE AMBULANCE DU FORT, COURTRAI,

Photos 1918

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From a narrower point of view there was another aspect of this civilian work to be borne in mind: the early recognition of its value undoubtedly had a favourable effect on the status of the Unit with the British authorities in the field, and to an organisation on a voluntary basis within the zone of the armies this was no small matter. For it was far from easy for such bodies to obtain facilities for work in a front area, but the Friends' Ambulance Unit soon came to be regarded almost as an officially recognised agency for the performance of civilian work within the Second Army area, so that, even after the partial hiatus in its activity between 1916 and 1918, it was not difficult to resume when the emergency ultimately arose. It is explained elsewhere how all attempts to secure front area medical work with the British Armies were made in vain, for to gain such work would have meant the surrender of that independence which the Unit could hardly give up without losing its chief moral *raison d'être*. But civilian work was on a different footing, and facilities were readily granted when they were required. An entirely official affiliation to the Second Army there could never be; possibly the work might have lost something of its value if there had been. But an indication of the status of the Unit's civilian sections may be seen in a letter of the D.M.S. of the Second Army written in April, 1915, where he says that the Army Commander, Lord Plumer (then Sir Herbert Plumer), "recognises the splendid work which the Friends' Ambulance Unit has done, and is still doing, amongst the civil population in the area in which the Second Army is operating, and although not giving official recognition to your Unit, he has directed that every assistance be given it by the Army Medical Service and others concerned in carrying out its beneficent work." This assistance was at all times readily given; not only did those responsible for the direction of the Unit find sympathy and encouragement in the many negotiations that took place, but those engaged in carrying out the work received the most valuable help and advice. The relationships between the Search Party and the Mobile Laboratories, or between the French Civilian Relief Section and the Medical Staff of the XV Corps, are typical of much cordial co-operation.

Scant mention has been made in these pages of the American Red Cross despite the important part it played in the last 15 months of the civilian work. But the omission was not accidental, for it was felt that greater justice could be done to an expression of the Unit's debt of gratitude in these concluding remarks than in the course of the narration. Colonel Bicknell, the Commissioner for Belgium of the American Red Cross, and Major (later Colonel) Van Schaick, the Deputy Commissioner, in the course of their investigations made during 1917, discovered that, though civilian needs were not at that time great, the Friends' Ambulance Unit had the largest existing organisation and the necessary experience for undertaking any work that might arise. They decided to assist where assistance was most wanted, and when the call came in the spring of 1918, they liberally placed large resources at the Unit's disposal. It is no exaggeration to say that the Unit could not otherwise have undertaken one quarter of the work it actually performed from then down to the end. It was relieved of all financial anxiety at a time when the raising of additional funds for emergency

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work was becoming increasingly difficult, and it received the valuable loan of a small fleet of heavy lorries indispensable for ravitaillement, evacuation and salvage work. The Unit had but to ask for clothing and food supplies for relief work, and the American Red Cross stores were at its disposal. And what was more, it received also the benefit of their counsel and sympathy, always wise and always appreciated. In another way the connection with the American Red Cross was a close one, because during 1918 several members of that body were attached for service with the Unit, some of them later taking a prominent part in Belgian relief work after the Armistice.

On Colonel Bicknell's departure to investigate conditions in Serbia, Colonel Van Schaick took his place as Commissioner for Belgium. His forward office was at La Panne, where he was conveniently close to the Unit's headquarters. Later he moved to Bruges, and thence to Brussels, maintaining always in spite of his many activities a lively interest in all the Unit's work and displaying throughout a deep understanding of its ideals. The Unit, perhaps, received no greater compliment than the confidence which he and Colonel Bicknell placed in it.

When the Unit finally left France in March, 1919, the work of civilian relief did not entirely come to an end, for at that time some thirty of its members, under the Adjutant, William Mordey, were transferred to the American Red Cross. With headquarters at Ghent, their function was the supervision of certain large warehouses established in Belgium for the distribution of varions measures of relief to the civilians of the devastated area, and the management of the transport connected therewith. There was something fitting in this last development of the long story of the civilian work, and especially in the choice of the leader of this new party of workers. For throughout all that we have described in these pages, the able and far-seeing direction of William Mordey was of the utmost value both in planning and in carrying out these multifarious activities in Belgium. In addition to his responsible position as Adjutant of the Unit, with all the work which that involved, he was constantly engaged on these difficult problems of civilian distress. No one who had experience of this work can doubt how greatly his personality and ability contributed to its success, nor how fully this was realised by those Belgians who knew him. Indeed there is to-day, in some parts of Flanders, a generation of small children who fifty years hence may well have given the name of "Vader Mordey" an almost legendary significance. By this transference, then, although the Unit as such was disbanded, civilian relief work was carried on throughout 1919 by a number of its former members under the ægis of that allied body to whom it owed so much.

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CHAPTER III

MILITARY HOSPITALS IN FRANCE.

The St. Pierre Hospital, Malo-les-Bains.

IF we take the military hospitals of the Unit in the order in which they were established, the hospital at the Villa St. Pierre, Malo, heads the list, although neither in the length of its existence nor the number of its patients does it take first place. At the time of its inception (November, 1914) the French *Service de Santé* found its resources severely strained by the heavy casualties in the fighting to the north of Ypres and along the line of the Yser. It was glad to accept the help of small auxiliary hospitals to ease the pressure on its own regular establishments, and the St. Pierre Hospital was only one of several such in the Dunkirk district during the first winter of the war.

After the need for help in this direction had been ascertained, the Principal Medical Officer of the Unit and the second-in-command crossed to London on November 19th to consult with the Unit Committee on the setting-up of a hospital in the Dunkirk area. The next day it was decided to proceed with the scheme as quickly as possible. And quickly enough the orgainsation was put in hand; for by the evening of the 22nd the whole medical equipment, including beds, and the necessary nursing staff, had been found. In this the Unit was helped very largely by the generosity of the Hon. Mrs. Frederick Guest, who placed most of the equipment at the Unit's disposal; and she was instrumental in finding the small band of eight trained nurses, who, under the charge of Miss Slade, crossed to Dunkirk on the 23rd. Meanwhile, during these few days, a suitable building in Malo had been kindly offered as a site for the new hospital. This was the Villa St. Pierre, standing on the sea-front with a fine open outlook over the beach, a healthy and pleasant position for its purpose. The Villa was prepared at the shortest notice; a new floor had to be laid in one part of the house, and electric light was installed. Its three stories (with a basement) found room for fifty beds altogether, along with an operating theatre, X-ray room, and accommodation for medical stores. The staff consisted of one resident medical officer, the matron, seven nursing sisters, a secretary, a dispenser, a quartermaster, nine orderlies, and the housekeeper, Miss Irene Noel (now Mrs. P. J. Baker). The nursing staff was quartered in a neighbouring house, which also contained the secretary's office and a kit store. Such were the general arrangements of the St. Pierre Hospital, which received its first batch of patients on November 24th, only four days after its establishment had been decided upon in London.

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The hospital was, of course, for French soldiers only, and received all kinds of surgical and medical cases other than those of infectious disease. Patients were brought up usually from the station at Dunkirk, about a mile and a half away, but no light cases were sent up to St. Pierre from the distributing centre; the admissions generally were serious cases. But as a rule those who were fit to be evacuated to hospitals in the interior of France were sent away within three weeks, only the most serious remaining longer. The flow of patients continued steadily throughout the winter, and the growing experience of the staff soon made its task lighter than during the opening days. But during the spring the numbers began to decrease. The fighting on the northern sectors was not so sustained, and the long-range bombardments of Dunkirk led to the flow of patients being diverted to other directions. The maintenance of small hospitals could obviously only be worth while if the pressure on the larger was serious, and so, after consultation on June 23rd with General Boisson of the *Service de Santé*, it was decided to close down St. Pierre. This was done in the early days of July. From first to last a total of 413 patients had been treated there.

This first hospital of the Unit gave a valuable experience to everyone concerned; it had been a sound training for further ventures, and from its staff reinforcements for the other Unit hospitals then in existence were always forthcoming.

The Queen Alexandra Hospital, Malo-les-Bains.

With the Queen Alexandra Hospital we come to a longer story, and one which stands for one of the Unit's largest and best-known enterprises. Indeed it would not be easy to point to any single hospital in the Western theatre of war which provided for such a surprising variety of medical needs as were to be found in the Dunkirk area. But to understand how the hospital came to have its peculiar character, we must be content to follow its development from its opening in March, 1915, down to its close in December, 1918.

To go right to the beginning, the Queen Alexandra Hospital was originally established to help to cope with that same typhoid epidemic of 1914–1915, the gravity of which in Flanders we have already described in the preceding chapter of this book. In Belgium the Unit was concerned primarily with the ravages of the disease among the civilian population, but at Dunkirk it was also faced with the inevitable corollary, its prevalence among the soldiers stationed in that fever-stricken corner of Flanders. During November, 1914, the Unit doctors working in the evacuation sheds at Dunkirk station found an ever-increasing number of patients showing the symptoms of typhoid fever among the already large number of casualties from wounds and ordinary sickness. Their condition was pitiable in the extreme, for it must be confessed that the skilled and careful attention necessary for such cases was wofully lacking in the French medical service as it then existed at Dunkirk. They lay cheek by jowl with the ordinary cases in the sheds, stretched on the same straw-covered

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floor, and receiving nothing beyond the kindly but rough-and-ready ministrations of the overworked French *infirmiers*. They all needed immediate treatment, but they had to wait until they could be transported by train far into the interior before they could obtain adequate nursing. Fortunately, we hasten to add, this lamentable state of affairs was remedied, and a certain amount of suitable accommodation in the Dunkirk district was provided by the *Service de Santé;* at one time during that winter the area held between 4,000 and 5,000 of these cases. But in the meantime the position was a very grave one, and when it was realised that it was likely to be so for some time to come, the Unit's medical authorities decided that something should be done to meet this deficiency.

Towards Christmas the Principal Medical Officer laid the question before the Committee in London, and early in January, 1915, the Chairman himself came to Dunkirk and discussed the position with the chief of the *Service de Santé*, the Inspector-General Salle. The result of these negotiations was the decision to set up at once a hospital capable of accommodating at least 100 patients, and steps were immediately taken to find a suitable building. It was found that all the possible buildings in the district were already occupied, and that accordingly the new hospital would have to be constructed on a new site. The delay was to be regretted but could not be avoided. A suitable piece of land, however, was quickly found in Malo itself, and on January 22nd, 1915, the then Governor of the *Région Fortifiée de Dunkerque*, General Plantey, gave a requisition for the use of the chosen terrain. In the conduct of all these negotiations valuable aid was given by Miss Noel (Mrs. P. J. Baker); nothing could have helped their smoothness and success more than her ability and personality.

The site in question had a cheerless aspect in those days, which the later growth of the hospital buildings certainly concealed in great measure. It lay six or seven hundred yards inland from the sea-front, straight down the Avenue du Kursaal, and about four hundred yards to the east of the deep-sunk moat which lies at the foot of the old earthwork fortifications of Dunkirk, with the open space of the *Champ de Manœuvres* lying between. And so one looked over from the hospital towards Dunkirk on as pleasant a view of that rather drab town as could be found. The *glacis* rose steeply up from the moat with its grassy slope, topped at one angle by a thin line of small trees, and beyond that lay the wooded nurseries and private gardens of Rosendael, the most agreeable of Dunkirk's residential suburbs. But the *terrain vague*, as the Governor's requisition described it, was a long strip, roughly triangular in form, of sandy hummocks in a very ill-kept condition. The two sides were approximately 250 yards long, with the base about 80 yards. Across this triangle ran the Rue de l'Hôtel de Ville, a part of which had thus to be enclosed within the hospital palisades; a solitary lamp-post beside one of the hospital corridors was all that latterly remained to show where a public street had formerly passed to join the Avenue du Kursaal. Near one corner stood a fair-sized house, the Estaminet de l'Alliance, several rooms of which were taken over for hospital purposes.

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To prepare this site for building, a great deal of levelling and clearing work had to be done. For this purpose the Governor kindly put a party of about 200 French Engineers (*Génie*) at the Unit's disposal for this purpose. (It is pleasing to recall how, in those days of plenty, they were refreshed and enheartened in their arid task by a daily issue of *pâtisserie*). In less than three weeks the ground was ready and a six-foot wooden palisade erected to enclose the whole; drains also were dug, water and gas pipes laid on, and the brick foundations for the coming huts erected. In the meantime six huts capable of holding 20 patients each were procured in Paris, while orders for four similar ones were placed with local contractors. The general arrangements of the hospital were planned for typhoid requirements, and a small laboratory was fitted up in a room of the Estaminet de l'Alliance.

The nursing staff, with Miss Drakard as Matron, arrived on February 15th, and two dwelling-houses in the Avenue du Kursaal, Nos. 7 and 9, were rented to accommodate them. No. 11 also was taken to house the orderlies of the hospital. By the beginning of March, the buildings were far enough advanced to receive patients, huts " C," " D," and " H " being used as the first wards, with " G " temporarily commissioned as the kitchen. The hospital was for official purposes attached to the French Eighth Army, and on March 3rd the first convoy of twenty patients was admitted.

On that day, too, the hospital was inspected by the Governor of Dunkirk, then General Eydoux, and the *Médecin-Principal* Arnaud. The General, whose help and interest had throughout been of the greatest value, was invited to name the hospital, and he proposed that it should be known as " *l'Hôpital* Queen Alexandra." Through the good offices of the Chairman of the Unit, Her Majesty's gracious assent to this proposal was obtained, and under this title, or, to be strictly accurate, under its more familiar abbreviations of the " Queen Alex." or the " Q.A.H.," the hospital became a landmark to both French and British throughout the Dunkirk area.

Once started the work of the hospital went forward apace, and Dr. E. W. Goodall (its first *Médecin-Chef*) and his staff were kept busily engaged. Within a few weeks the number of patients had risen to 100, and the hospital buildings, additional to the actual wards, were soon completed. They included the spacious kitchen and store-rooms, the offices of the *Médecin-Chef* and the Secretary, the laundry buildings, the mortuary, and the covered passage-ways which connected all the important parts of the establishment. An essential addition made during the first weeks was the large boiler designed by a member of the Unit for destroying infectious waste; a feature which so attracted the favourable attention of the French medical authorities that they ordered a number on the same model for their own use. Until April the typhoid cases alone kept the hospital busy, but towards the end of that month the epidemic fortunately was subsiding, among the soldiers as among the civilians. The wards were already less full than hitherto, when the first long-range bombardment of Dunkirk and district on April 27th took everyone by surprise. It was felt by the authorities

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that patients should so far as possible be kept out of a place where this danger was present, and the lines of evacuation of French sick and wounded were accordingly diverted from Dunkirk. This meant a great reduction in the number of patients at the " Queen Alexandra," as at other hospitals in the area, and for some time only two wards were kept open. But the energies of the nursing staff, too large now for the reduced ward accommodation, were not wasted, for it was arranged that as many as could be spared should be lent to the Belgian military hospital (Ambulance de l'Océan) at La Panne. When another bombardment took place on May 10th, the evacuation of most of the remaining patients was ordered, and until the end of that month the hospital was quieter than ever. But in June the wards were again filling up, until five were in commission. But on the 22nd came a third bombardment and evacuation was once more ordered. Once again however, as the sense of security grew, patients were sent down to Dunkirk, and the Queen Alexandra Hospital received its share. By September the routine was re-established, and by a couple of months later all the organised accommodation was in use.

During the autumn of 1915 arrangements were first made for the admission of British patients. Hitherto the Dunkirk area had contained only a very few representatives of the British services. A small Naval hospital, under the charge of Staff-Surgeon Henry Cooper, R.N. (now Wing Commander Cooper, D.S.O., R.A.F.), had been in existence for some time on the ground floor of the Hotel Belle Vue, Malo. It could, however, only accommodate about twenty patients, and all serious surgical cases had to be treated at the French *Hôpital Militaire* at Rosendael. But obviously these patients would be happier with English doctors and English nurses to care for them, and accordingly Staff-Surgeon Cooper requested the Unit to arrange for the admission of Naval officers and all serious surgical cases to the Queen Alexandra Hospital. This was the beginning of the Naval side of the hospital's work, and it developed into one of the most important. About the same time, the British Base Commandant at Dunkirk informed Dr. Bertram Smith, who was then in charge of the hospital, that the first companies of British Labour troops had arrived at Dunkirk for work in the docks, and that provision for their medical needs should be made at the " Queen Alexandra." With the sanction of the A.D.M.S., Calais, under whose jurisdiction Dunkirk lay, the " Q.A.H." then became the recognised hospital for British Army troops in the district. And as at this time there were no Army medical officers stationed at Dunkirk, one of the Unit's doctors made the daily inspection of the men's billets and each morning held a sick parade.

The number of patients from these Labour companies was unfortunately quite considerable. Most of the men in them at that time were past their prime, and ill-prepared for the hardships of a soldier's life even at a base port. Recruited mainly from among the dock labourers of the principal English seaports, they had long been accustomed to their own simple homes, returning from their daily round to their firesides and families. But here, though their work was much the same, they were billeted at first in the large bleak rooms of

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some warehouses near the docks, draughty and insufficiently heated, the general arrangements having been hurriedly organised to meet the urgent need for their services at this base. Although before very long satisfactory hutted camps were established for them, their first quarters were far from suitable for men in middle-age and not hardened by a soldier's preliminary training. The result was that many of them contracted chills, influenza, bronchitis, and kindred maladies requiring hospital treatment.

By now the " Queen Alexandra " was providing for three main classes of patients, French military, British naval, and British military; and it is easy to imagine that the administrative work in these circumstances was not simple. Before the year closed there were other changes to record: many structural alterations; the provision of two new huts by the French, which allowed mess-rooms and orderlies' sleeping quarters to be constructed; and the fitting-up of a fully equipped operating-theatre with X-ray room attached. And an important development in the staffing of the hospital was marked by the arrival in October, 1915, of the first party of V.A.D. nurses to assist the trained nursing sisters. They were the first of many who served at the hospital throughout the next three years, always on work exacting and arduous, often too in circumstances of strain and danger. From the first the highest expectations were formed of them, and from the first they were amply fulfilled.

By the time that the hospital was able to mark off its first anniversary on the calendar, in March, 1916, its work was going forward steadily along the lines thus set down. British patients tended to increase in numbers, but when a R.A.M.C. officer was stationed in Dunkirk the daily sick parade was of course conducted by him. The work of the dental department, started in the previous autumn, expanded rapidly as the fame of Bevan Neave, the dental surgeon, spread throughout the formations in the area. His practice included not only officers and men from the neighbourhood of Dunkirk, but members of the Unit in all of its scattered sections, who were visited with the help of a Ford car and a portable dental outfit. Later in the year regular visits were also paid to Coxyde, to attend to the teeth of the men of the R.N. Siege Guns stationed there. Another valuable branch of the " Queen Alexandra " which began to develop during 1916, was the routine disinfection of troops suffering as a result of verminous surroundings. The extent of this work was increased by the installation of a powerful steam-disinfector presented to the hospital by the Right Hon. J. W. Wilson, M.P.

Altogether the year 1916 was a time of steady if not exciting development. The round of daily duty was broken now and then by a variety of incidents, now by a concert for the patients, or by a particularly unpleasant air raid, now by an epidemic of mumps, or by the completion of some new feature in the hospital buildings. Or again there would be the interest of distinguished visitors to mark one day from the others. Here are a few extracts from a hospital journal of that year :—

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Plate XIII
Facing p. 72

QUEEN ALEXANDRA HOSPITAL, MALO.

Photo 1917

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January 25th. Bombs dropped within a quarter of a mile about 6 o'clock this morning. Medical staff called out to a house hit in Rosendael, and two civilian patients brought in seriously injured.

February 12th. The hospital drains are being thoroughly overhauled . . . luckily we have an expert on this who is also an enthusiast.

March 3rd. The first anniversary to-day . . . at night a supper and dance.

March 25th. The orderlies' sleeping room in "D" has been turned into an infectious ward. Two small isolation tents have also been erected.

April 22nd. Nurses' sick-bay has been completed.

May 13th. Gardening on a large scale is going forward in the hospital grounds. Flower plots dug and planted between the wards; creepers put in to grow up the sides of the corridors.

May 19th–22nd. Eight separate air raids by day and night; over 350 bombs dropped. Many casualties, British and French, admitted.

June 12th. Work on the large new dug-out is going forward. The Army has supplied generous quantities of timber, etc., for this.

July 1st. During last week the dug-out was used for the first time; the knowledge that shelter was available spread confidence among the patients, though at first only a few of the more nervous went down to it.

July 5th. Our administrative status has been changed. We are now no longer "*Hôpital de l'Armée*" but "*Hôpital de la Place.*"

September 13th. Lord Northcliffe visited the hospital to-day.

November 14th. Work is going forward with the preparation of a new ward "M" for British officers. With the increasing number of British Army patients this is a pressing need.

December 25th. Christmas celebrations. Carols both French and English. . . . General Balfourier, Commanding the 36th *Corps d'Armée* was present with his staff at the Christmas tree in the afternoon.

The new year opened quietly, and for some months there was little to record except the increasing number and severity of the air raids. But one or two occasions stand out from the ordinary routine. The hospital gave shelter one night in January to the rescued officers and ratings from the transport S.S. *Port Nicholson*, mined not far out from Dunkirk. The first week in March brought round the hospital's second anniversary, and an afternoon concert was honoured by the presence of H.R.H. Prince Alexander of Teck (now Earl of Athlone), General Balfourier and his Divisional Generals, Commodore Johnson, Colonel Marescaux, Base Commandant, and many other French and British officers in the district. One morning in March the nurses' billet in the Avenue du Kursaal had a narrow escape from destruction, when a bomb fell in the street outside, blowing in all the windows, and numerous splinters burying themselves in the walls of the front rooms. But fortunately none of the nursing staff was injured, though three of the Unit's drivers, starting up their cars on the opposite side of the street, were wounded.

In June, 1917, however, a new stage was marked by the arrival of the XV Corps to establish its Headquarters in Malo; they were followed by the British Fourth Army, which took over the coastal sectors of the front hitherto held by the French. As the "Queen Alexandra" still remained the only British hospital in the area, a good deal of work for the troops now stationed there fell to it, and till November, when the Fourth Army was withdrawn, the British section of the hospital acted as a casualty clearing station. Additional wards soon became an urgent necessity, and the R.N.A.S., from whose aerodromes a number of sick and wounded were always received, supplied two new huts. Further accommodation had to be found for the Chinese, Egyptian, and British West Indian Labour troops in the district, and for their use several large marquees

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were erected in the hospital enclosure. Altogether the hospital now presented a bewildering diversity of race, colour, and tongue; and over and above the Naval and Army patients there was always a sprinkling of civilian sick, merchant seamen for the most part.

None who knew the region of Dunkirk during this period can easily forget the strain and anxiety of September, 1917. During that month the town and the environs were under an almost incessant bombardment from air, land and sea. The casualties unhappily were severe, and the pressure on the hospital was never greater. A number of bombs and shells fell close to the hospital buildings, some of which were penetrated here and there by fragments, but the hospital's luck held good and no serious damage was done. But additional dug-out accommodation had to be prepared, a very large sand-bagged shelter being built beside the kitchen with the help of the Canadian Railway Engineers, capable of holding stretcher-cases on wooden racks, and fitted with a stove, electric light, and a number of seats. In the midst of all this anxious work, the hospital staff suffered a severe loss by the death from illness of Miss Katherine Kinnear, one of the V.A.D. members. Throughout the autumn and early winter the air raids continued to be frequent, though not quite so sustained as during September. There was an exciting night shortly before Christmas, when, on one of the clear moonlight nights favoured by hostile raiders, a fire broke out in the kit-store hut, which was entirely destroyed. But thanks to the energy of the staff, aided by the Naval and Air sections which came to help, the fire did not spread to the other buildings.

Meanwhile work in the hospital was going on steadily, and all available accommodation was fully occupied. Towards the end of November, 1917, the Fourth Army was leaving, and after the departure of its principal medical formations, the "Queen Alexandra" was left to deal with all their remaining casualties in the northern sectors. As many as 60 per day were admitted and evacuated for a time, but fortunately this did not last for long, and the hospital soon reverted to lines of communication administration.

But this did not mean that its work was to diminish. Dunkirk had by now become a more important British base than formerly, and, with the Navy, Army, and Air Force represented in greater numbers than before, there was plenty of work to be done. But at the end of the year the Naval and Army authorities urged the removal of the "Queen Alexandra" to a safer situation. To find such a place within easy reach of the town was far from easy. A number of large buildings of various kinds were inspected, but some were impossible to secure, others were inconvenient for the approach of ambulances. Much help in the search was given by an old friend of the "Q.A.H.," Lieut. Barendson, of the French *Service de Santé*, for a long time attached to the hospital. In the end, however, a fortunate discovery was made in the Château de Petite Synthe, lying about a mile and a half to the south-west of Dunkirk, and on this place the choice finally fell. The eighteenth century house stood about half-way between the village of Petite Synthe and Pont de Petite Synthe on the

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Dunkirk–Bourbourg canal. It had been converted by a local doctor into a large nursing home, and so made a convenient centre round which to group the hospital sheds. There were thickly-wooded grounds, with ornamental waters, all round the house, and the trees gave a considerable measure of protection from aerial observation. Its position made it easy of access from the British aerodromes and military camps, as well as from the French evacuation stations. An agreement was made with the owner of the Château and the necessary authorisation obtained from the military authorities. With characteristic generosity the American Red Cross offered to bear a large share of the expense of removal. After a survey by the Unit's architect it was found that all the mobile huts of the hospital could be placed around the main block of buildings without any material damage to the grounds as they stood, and fortunately it was not necessary to cut down any of the fine old trees.

On March 1st the first working-party was sent to Petite Synthe to make ready, and eight days later the first ward had been removed from Malo and set up on the new site. The others followed quickly, and this led of course to a difficult period of transition at the hospital, where the flow of patients remained steady. But tents and marquees helped to tide over the days until the whole establishment, with all its paraphernalia, could be transported to Petite Synthe. About this time the " Q.A.H." began to receive its first American Naval patients, adding yet another class to its varied *clientèle*.

When the great German offensive broke upon the Western front during March, Dunkirk, as an important base, was again heavily bombarded by aircraft, long-range gun, and destroyers. On March 23rd several of the heavy shells dropped not far from the hospital enclosure, and fragments and débris fell among the buildings. Stretcher parties were out in the town in search of wounded in the neighbouring streets. This uncomfortable state of affairs seemed likely to continue and the arrangements for removal to Petite Synthe were hurried forward. The Unit's Headquarters were asked to be ready to provide the necessary motor transport as soon as the move could be made, and the next night certainly showed that the sooner it could be made the better; for about midnight the shelling opened out again, and the second shell pitched in the hospital grounds just where wards " G " and " H " had stood before their removal. Falling in the sand within a few feet of a bell-tent where two orderlies were sleeping, it blew them and the tent into the air, but happily both men were unhurt by any of the fragments; two of the doctors also were knocked over by the explosion. It was then decided to evacuate the whole hospital immediately. All available cars were brought down from Headquarters, and the small hours of the morning were spent in constant running to and from Petite Synthe. Fortunately the transfer was completed without accident, and within two hours from starting all the patients, 85 in number, were comfortably installed again in the new hospital on the other side of the town. Both to the hospital staff and to the Headquarters motor department credit is due for the completion of a difficult task in so short a time.

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It was not long before the normal hospital round was going on at Petite Synthe : to many indeed the change of scene was a pleasant relief after the long months in the familiar enclosure at Malo; and as the spring opened into summer, the grounds of the new " Q.A.H." proved a delightful dwelling-place for patients and staff alike. The full accommodation of 200 beds was soon restored and work went on much as before. A few more extracts from a hospital journal illustrate the minor developments during the spring and summer months of 1918 :—

April 12th. The Barge Hospital *Notre Dame de Pérpetuel Secours* has been moved opposite the Ferme Codron, about half-a-mile away, and staffed from the hospital. . . . It is to be used for civilian wounded from the invaded country in the Lys Valley.

April 17th. Further accommodation for Belgian refugee patients is required. A large marquee is being pitched in the hospital grounds. . . .

April 24th. We have many of the casualties from yesterday's Ostend and Zeebrugge landings in the Naval section. . . .

May 5th. Plans are being made to ensure speedy evacuation of patients and equipment from the hospital if the Allies are forced to abandon Dunkirk. Each member of the staff has his allotted responsibility . . . the office staff can be heard bemoaning the bulk of their polyglot archives. . . .

May 25th. There has been a heavy rush of French patients during the week. Heavy fighting in Flanders and a wave of severe influenza have brought up their numbers, and the French wards are having a strenuous time.

June 3rd. The P.M.O. has added the D.S.O., and the Matron the Royal Red Cross, to their already formidable rows of ribands. . . .

July 10th. Work is going on with the installation of the steam-laundry machinery in an annexe of the Château, an anonymous gift of £200 having been given to provide this valuable addition to our equipment.

The hospital was certainly in a more secure position now, although aerial attacks on the neighbouring aerodromes were frequent and, on one or two occasions in May, of unrivalled severity. But precautions had none the less to be taken, and, since the soil at Petite Synthe did not allow the construction of underground dug-outs, the wards were strongly protected by surrounding walls of sandbags on the principle approved by the military authorities. In addition a line of zig-zag splinter-proof trenches was dug to afford a certain measure of protection in case of need.

One event stands out in the history of the hospital during this summer, the visit of His Majesty the King on August 13th. His Majesty arrived with his Staff on a purely surprise visit at half past twelve and remained for about half-an-hour, making a thorough inspection of the wards. He chatted with several of the patients, including some members of the Unit injured a few days before by the destruction of the Unit Headquarters, and there is no need to say how highly the honour of his visit was appreciated both by patients and staff.

So far as the work of the hospital is concerned, August and September were fairly normal months, though the latter month brought an increased number of French patients. But in October came one of the " Queen Alexandra's " busiest periods, and right up to the date of the Armistice everyone was kept working at top pressure. The influenza epidemic was at its height, and exceptionally large numbers of flying officers were admitted from the front. The accommodation had to be strained to the utmost capacity, as these daily averages of patients under treatment will make clear :—

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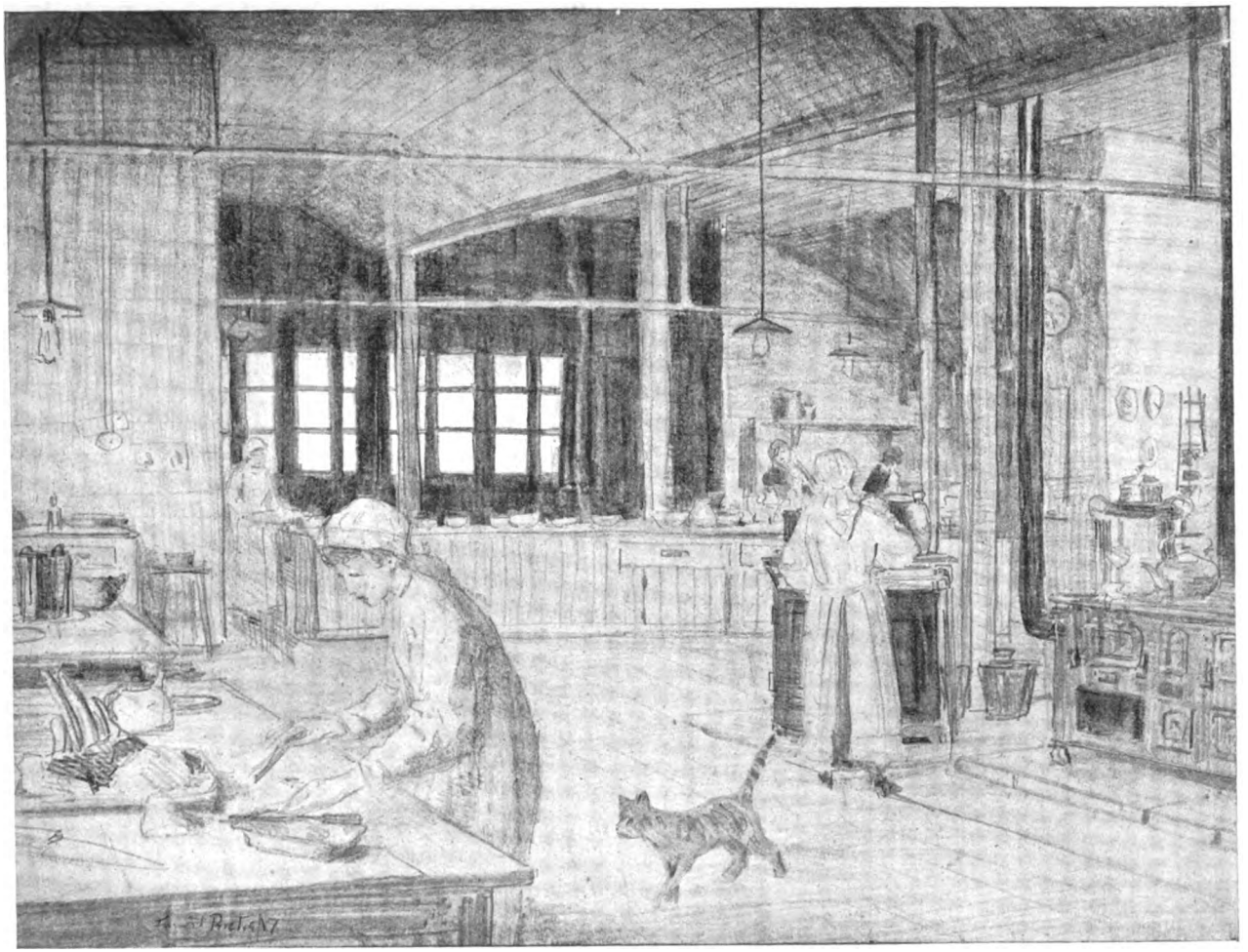

Plate XIV THE KITCHEN, QUEEN ALEXANDRA HOSPITAL. Facing p. 76

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Week ending October 19th	159 *per diem.*
„ „ October 26th	191 „ „
„ „ November 2nd	208 „ „

But after the Armistice, fitly celebrated at the " Q.A.H." as everywhere else, there came a relaxation, and the figures of admissions in all sections of the hospital became normal again. The influenza and pneumonia scourges did not, however, subside for some time longer, and it was with deep regret that the death from this cause of a member of the Unit Works Department, L. G. Jarvis, had to be recorded.

With the cessation of the bombing which had hitherto prevented the full use of Dunkirk as a military centre, the town and its neighbourhood now became busier than ever before. Large demobilisation camps were established at several points, and the great numbers of British troops in the town gave it an almost unfamiliar aspect to those who had so long grown accustomed to its half-deserted streets. For some time the " Queen Alexandra " remained the only hospital for British troops, but early in December No. 8 Canadian Stationary Hospital was opened, and to it all British cases were thenceforward taken. The admission of British military cases to the " Queen Alexandra " ceased on December 8th, that of British Naval and French Army patients on the 20th. Christmas came with only a handful of patients in the wards, and it was possible to enjoy a more hearty celebration of the season than in any previous year.

With the last patients gone, the New Year opened on a scene of packing and dispersal. The nursing staff left first, and it was not long before the buildings were dismantled and ready for disposal. Much of the store of drugs and medical accessories was sent up to the liberated towns in Belgium where the Unit's Relief Sections were at work, to be distributed by them among such institutions as were in need of them after the exigencies of the past few years. So ended the Queen Alexandra Hospital, so long a familiar feature in the war-time life of the Dunkirk district. Figures at best make a poor show: but the following may help to indicate at once the volume of its work and the variety of its character.

Total Number of French Army cases treated	2324
„ „ „ British Naval „ „	2187
„ „ „ *British Army „ „	6292
„ „ „ U.S.A. Naval „ „	103
„ „ „ †Civilian „ „	203
„ „ „ F.A.U. „ „	612
„ „ „ German „ „	1
GRAND TOTAL	11,722
Total Number of Dental Appointments from October 21st, 1915 ..	16,192

* Including native labour troops (Chinese, Egyptian, West Indian, Cape Boys, etc.).
† Including merchant seamen, French and Belgian civilians, etc.

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It would be less than justice to omit mention of at least a few of those who by their energy and devotion contributed to the success of the Queen Alexandra Hospital. The services of several of the staff were recognised by the award of honours by both French and British authorities; that the services of the whole staff were highly appreciated was made clear by the cordial tributes of many distinguished visitors to the hospital. But none who knew the "Queen Alexandra," whether as patient or as worker, could forget the names of Dr. Humphrey Nockolds, Dr. E. W. Goodall, Dr. A. H. Fardon, Dr. H. J. Fardon, Dr. E. Bertram Smith, Dr. H. C. Manning, and Bevan Neave; some of these rendered valued service at other F.A.U. hospitals as well; but the most fitting place to record their names is in connection with this, the principal hospital of the Unit. And among the nursing staff it will perhaps be enough to allow the names of Miss H. K. Repton, Matron during the greater part of the hospital's existence, and of Miss A. Alexander, to stand for the devoted skill and loyal courage of all the staff who served under them.

But before leaving the "Queen Alexandra," we may perhaps supplement this necessarily bare record of its development with a descriptive account of the hospital at work, as it appeared during the summer of 1917, and already printed in the third annual Report of the Unit.

The Queen Alexandra Hospital: Some Impressions, 1917.

i. Enter the Visitor.

To the uninitiated the hospital—like the convent or the prison—holds a mystery.

It is not strange then that we have seen many visitors blinking and unnerved as they enter the unassuming portals of the "Queen Alexandra." On the left in a small room two telephones are ringing angrily, four voices abuse the telephones, many feet go to and fro. In the long passage hall a figure in sea boots, with long brushes and steaming buckets, swills and scrubs the creaking floor. Beyond that, where the passage ends in sunlight, youthful nurses arm-in-arm are walking and chatting together. Somewhere on the right a Beethoven sonata is being wrenched from an unwilling pianoforte; from the left, in friendly rivalry, a gramophone grunts ragtime to the summer air. Everybody seems to be whistling, except two doctors arguing heatedly together, a sister heard scolding in the distance. It is really rather like coming into Earl's Court Exhibition by a back entrance.

Advancing a little further into a sort of loggia overgrown with hops and nasturtiums, you may see on either hand long white-plastered sheds, not unlike the sides of half-timbered farmhouses. Beyond the wards and gardens and covered wooden passages an immense white parrot chasing a butterfly on a field azure proves ultimately to be part of the camouflage of a large marquee. Through this patchwork of sunlight patients are strolling lazily, some in shapeless ward-suits, some in grey; one has the sky-blue *képi* of the French Army, another the familiar khaki forage cap; others wear the flat white halos of the British

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Navy; here and there goes one with the scarlet-tufted bonnet of the *Fusiliers Marins*. They all seem very contented and at home together. Presently a motionless figure wrapped in blankets is pushed past hurriedly by some undoubtedly surgical individuals, all in spotless white, and it is painfully evident that this is a hospital after all.

ii. A Ward Observed.

Let us then inspect the hospital proper and visit a ward. The narrow wooden shed with its slightly sloping sides and barrel-roof suggests at once the long saloon of a ship. This ward holds three distinct types of men—first, solid, clean-shaven people, with combed and shining hair, indifferent to visitors, very British; these are the sailors and our neighbours of the Naval Air Service. Among them are bald, wrinkled, toothless old fellows, their red noses showing above the sheets, the fathers of large families; these are the labourers of the port, who have dropped into the holds of ships, or received on their heads a crane-load of timber, or have put their feet under railway trucks, or succumbed to chronic indigestion, people much to be pitied. Also, there are the strong, moustached, very sunburnt boys, who, you may plainly see, are "front area" troops suffering from some slight malaise. Such is the human composition of an English ward.

There is little furniture save the beds, covered alike in pink, but lacking the meticulous alignment of many military wards. Note the sinister erections that break the monotony at intervals. Here the hump of a bed-cradle shields a burnt and tender foot, there a complicated scaffolding betokens the latest hanging splint device for fractured legs, there a sort of white gallows supports lotion-filled cylinders and rubber tubing for the irrigation of a recent wound; there again a white perspiring face, propped upon a bedrest and many pillows, shows a spirit bravely fighting to regain the old ease and cheerfulness after the wasting effect of a serious operation. But on the whole the clean and airy ward, with its tall vase of Dorothy Perkins ramblers on the sister's table, the pink beds, and the pleasant banter of the soldiers' talk, leaves a happy impression on the mind.

iii. Enter the Patient.

There is no peace for the wicked when once, unknowing captive, he has entered the hospital doors. After a hurried cross-examination he is first deposited upon a seat in the hall while hectic office clerks flit past in search of the Medical Officer on duty. Ultimately he is conducted to his ward hugging his bandaged hand very tenderly. A little surprised that others are not so interested in this damaged article as himself, he sinks into the proffered chair, and before he has had time to take in the novel scene a cheerful lady has thrust a thermometer under his tongue; thus gagged he is engaged in conversation by an old but thoughtless friend, whom he discovers in the bed opposite, and is not a little relieved when the ordeal is over.

He is rapidly made to undress, is washed and put to bed, whence he enjoys the melancholy spectacle of seeing all his earthly goods heaped together and

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whirled away in a sack, heaven knows where. Then under the new title of "No. 9," he settles down to the wonderful sensation of something soft and springy, a great contrast to the hard boards, smelly brown blankets and grimy companions of last night in the tent.

iv. The Life He Leads.

Here we shall see him again next morning. At half-past four, when the dawn has hardly paled the eastern sky, his slumber is gently but firmly dissipated by another lady, the night V.A.D. with quiet shoes and sleepy eyes, who plants once more the inevitable thermometer where once grew cigarettes. At five a.m. the arrival of the morning orderly is announced, first by boots, then by a suggestive rattle of enamel basins, pails and pans; washing is in the air. Presently comes No. 9's turn to get a basin, two inches of warm water, yellow soap and a face cloth, and a kind person relieves his one-handed helplessness by washing his face for him. In half-an-hour the pleasant smell of brewing coffee, which has long been drifting down here from the kitchen, develops into the first meal of the day; bread and margarine are the prevailing features, augmented on Sundays with—relic of Sabbatarianism—an egg. No sooner are the beds made, the counterpanes pulled straight, and the floor swept, than breakfast No. 2 is announced by the same smell and the same rattle.

It is now that the serious business of the day begins. Down beyond the great stove the day sister is spreading for a grim meal. Innumerable little bowls are crowded together, a few thin and shining tools glisten in a kidney-dish, a tall glass measure holds in spirit a few curly scissors. From a polished drum the sister draws out fat swabs, pads of gauze, purple and white, and little rolls for plugging. Then, after the pouring out of lotions from gurgling blue bottles, and the appearance of a steaming jug of sterile water, comes a doctor, a short but convincing person, very swift and concentrated, and there is that about him which cautions the sister to bustle to and fro doubly quick. The V.A.D.'s become very self-conscious, the patients dumb, the orderly busy. In a few moments his ceremonial ablutions are finished, his white coat on, and the frail and steaming gloves are produced from the steriliser to arm him for the fray. But there is no need to describe what happens in so many hospitals daily; only for No. 9, who knows none of these things, there is a distinct sinking of heart, as he watches with a certain morbid curiosity the four figures breathlessly intent upon the dressing of the bad appendicitis case in the next bed.

Soon it is his own turn, and his embarrassment at the united attentions of several people is soon overcome by the twinge of pain as the doctor's forceps draw away the clinging gauze and the business of exploring the mess of yesterday begins. He thinks in a flash of the suddenness of his misfortune, the leisurely fatigue duty at the camp, the sharp whistle that roused his curiosity and then —before he could realise what it meant—the deafening " crump " of the bomb which bowled him over. How he had risen to his feet to see through the sand-cloud and the smoke, a couple of ripped tents and Sergeant Brown lying piled

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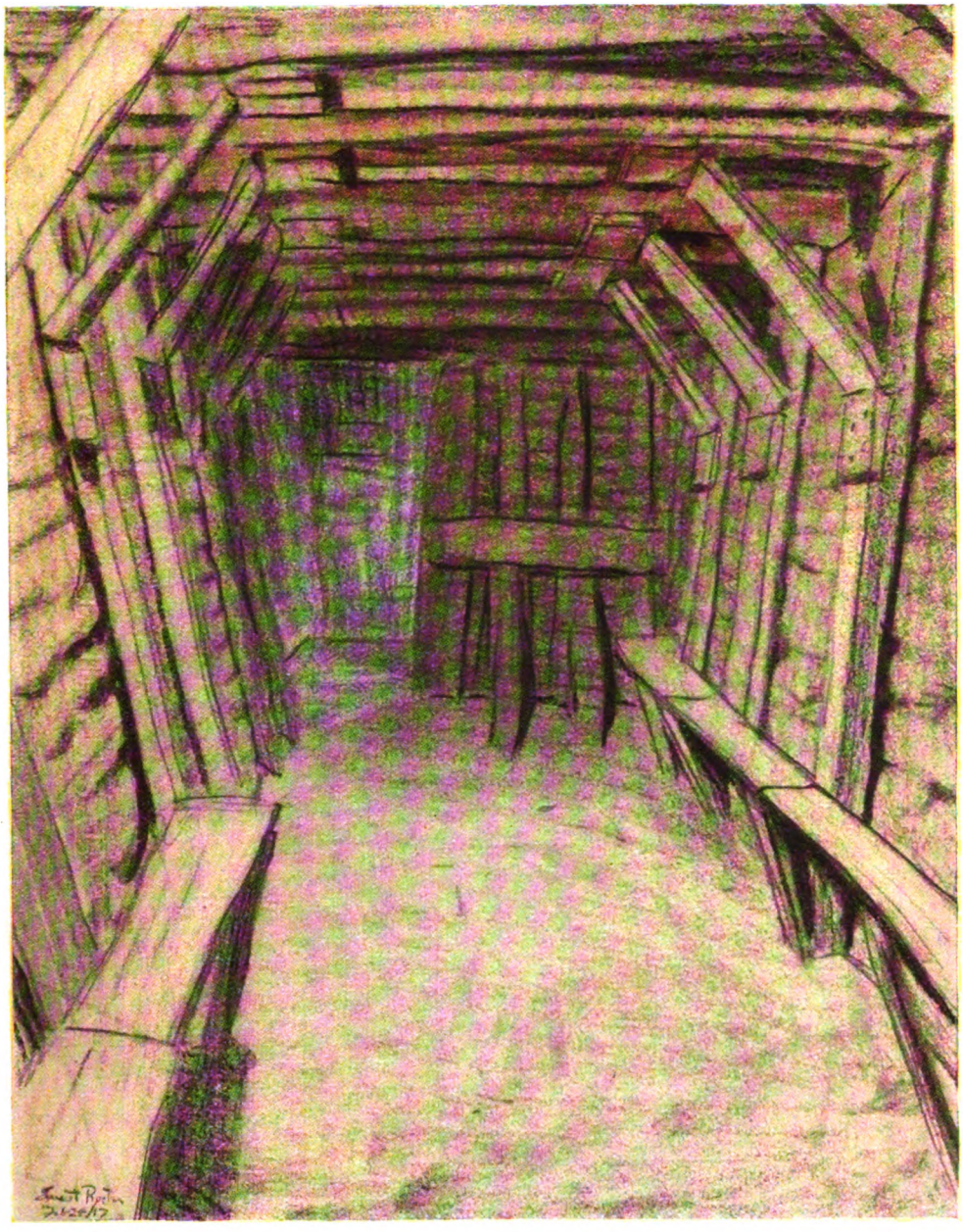

Plate XV A DUG-OUT, QUEEN ALEXANDRA HOSPITAL. Facing p. 80

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up and still, bleeding nastily. It seemed a long time before he awoke to the pain in his own left hand, and saw the little finger hanging stupidly down sideways.

But the prod of a probe brings him back to the ward ; the orderly is steadying his wrist and holding a receiver under the spoilt hand, the sister is fishing in the dressing-drum, the surgeon preparing to syringe the small cavity from which last evening, while cleaning it up under an anæsthetic, he extracted a little jagged piece of German steel and a bit of dirty tunic. When it is all over the pain is certainly softened a little, and the clean white bandage adds a touch of distinction to his appearance. The doctor, before going from the ward, takes down the chart from over No. 9's bed, sits down and scribbles upon it a technical account of the affair, as unintelligible to No. 9 as it is illegible, but very impressive. The dressing being done and the instruments of torture put out of sight, dinner—a serious meal of stew, potatoes and tapioca pudding gladdens the hearts of the " full diets," though No. 9—condemned to pay for suffering with hunger—gets tapioca only.

About this time there is a certain amount of scene shifting. Sisters and nurses go off to lunch, a new orderly appears, and in the busiest washing-up episode of the day the inevitable two stretcher cases choose to come in. These are borne in by such chance orderlies as happen to be about at the time, and followed at a respectful distance by the car driver pardonably anxious to recover his four cherished blankets. Brown blankets are quickly spread on two empty beds to receive the helpless new arrivals, one of whom has synovitis of the left knee and the other hæmorrhoids ; but let us not be troubled with their dolorous careers.

The ward, during the dinner to tea period, becomes rather like an inn parlour : visitors from the local units and the ships come along and gossip round the beds, medical activities leave the stage, ward work abates to a minimum, and it is all very homely and companionable, especially as No. 9's bosom friend has appeared from the camp with a tin of " Gold Flake," a pipe, some matches and shaving tackle, all jammed together in a haversack. Meanwhile a number of patients are packing up their chattels for evacuation. No. 14, a powerful Irishman, who is to return to duty having conquered his digestive troubles, is raving up and down the ward only just sufficiently clothed, swearing to deal with the heartless kit orderlies as St. Patrick did with snakes, for they have stolen away his braces ; to wreak upon them the vengeance they deserve he hurries to pull on his heavy service boots, when a considerable impediment which his left toe encounters reveals the place where the maligned kit man has conscientiously stowed the missing goods.

The rest of the day is uneventful : tea and bread and butter and jam at half-past three, then time to read a magazine story, then a repetition of the morning's washing process, then an hour to write a note to the wife ; then a dose of medicine for the less fortunate, and a supper at six of broth and stew. After this, unless his hand needs dressing again, No. 9 is at liberty, his bed being made, to compose himself to slumber to the oft-repeated strains of " Dixie" on the gramophone.

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So the days come and go, much alike. Occasionally a regimental concert party, or a more impromptu sing-song by the hospital celebrities, will produce an air of jollity, and provide No. 9 with a fresh tune to rattle in his head as he lies awake at night. There is little to mark Sunday from the routine of every day. In the early morning the lilt of popular French hymns may warn one that mass is being said in the hall, or the tinkle of a bell reveal the white robes of a priest passing by to bear the Sacrament to the sick, while late in the evening the sound of men's voices rising solemnly from the mess-room is a reminder that the presence of the stalwart orderlies here is not unconnected with religion. For No. 9, however, the chief feature of Sunday is an increase in the afternoon visitors, and the consequent increase in the chances of tobacco.

The time will come when he can get up, and having secured a tolerable fit in grey ward suits, and some padding bedroom slippers, he may hang over the railings of the corridor and watch the fat bees buzzing in the nasturtiums, or saunter round the potato patch at the end of the hospital, or if he has a vein of usefulness, help to dry the tea things as the orderly washes them. He is not fêted as are the wounded in many English hospitals. He is disturbed no more than medical necessities ordain; and the number of old patients who, if they happen still to be stationed in the area, come back to look at the hospital and ask for "the Sister in A" or "the Sister in B," shows how much, for all its imperfections, the homeliness and intimacy of the "Alexandra" are appreciated.

v. Side-Shows.

As the meals provide for the patient the important landmarks on his road to recovery, the kitchen from which these blessings flow may not be left unnoticed. It is a hall, light, wide, roomy, and tolerably cool—a meet subject for the eulogy of a house-agent's prospectus. Across the nearer end stretches a long counter covered with miscellaneous foods; beyond this, from the middle of the room, rises a host of metal chimneys, like a clump of tree trunks. The stoves from which they spring are humble and low, and it seems nothing short of a miracle that in one day they can produce five sets of breakfast, six sets of luncheon and six of supper, without (*ut ita dicam*) turning a hair. For this we must take into account the seasoned efficiency of the kitchen staff, the pillars of the place. Here you may see them: the comfortable Housekeeper, having calmly assisted at the amputation of a leg in the theatre, has wandered in to survey the scene of further butchery; Charles, the oldest inhabitant, merry and bespectacled, hews the frozen meat in cubes; Margot in sabots clumps along to the sink with an armful of dirty dishes, which she is like to drop if you look at her; Angèle the songful, Madeleine, and the sage Mesdames Lucie and Jeanne, each wipes and dries the never failing plates and forks and spoons. While here, the heart of this little self-contained community, stand the Three Graces in apron and neat brown dresses, mixing bread puddings for the wards or rolling pastry for the sisters' mess, chatting the while; a hive of industry.

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The kitchen is only one of the auxiliary departments of the hospital (of which the actual wards occupy perhaps two-thirds of the space). And if a man would have a conspectus of the attendant businesses of these various establishments, let him picture a number of miniature scenes of action grouped around the central subject, something like the medallions of the Seven Dolours clustering round the Weeping Virgin of Van Eyck.

Here in a little room the P.M.O., with tactful attention, gleans the beauties of French from the earnest *Médecin-Major* of a neighbouring hospital, proffering the fruits of English conversation in return. In another the Matron, imperturbable, shrewd, sits at a table loaded with flowers, cooling the worries of a flurried nurse.

Or look upon the other side of the canvas and watch in a darkened room the crackling of the X-ray apparatus, revealing the geography of a fractured thigh; and next to this a chamber dazzling white, in which, in an atmosphere of anæsthetics and strong antiseptics, two masked and aproned men are working with swift hands upon a little triangle of flesh between two towels—all that is visible of the side of the heavily breathing patient.

Or look in another medallion and see a colonel, dauntless in the face of countless foes, writhing in helpless submission in the dentist's chair, while a fierce Australian draws out tooth after tooth; he is only one of twenty of various ranks and sizes, nineteen of whom are now waiting hugging their jaws outside (like a queue for the pit), waiting their turn to come.

Or cast your eye on another kind of miniature picture. Here, in a brown hut covered with creeping flowers, a craftsman plies the trade of Joseph, planing fresh planks to make a linen cupboard or mending the legs of a limping chair. In this busy region also the Pharmacy is seen.

And here, where all the smoke and steam are coming from, is the great machine in whose maw garments and bedclothes, the cast-off of hospital society, endure a purgatory of heat and steam, and are won back to purity. In a shed not far from here, through a general store, that looks for all the world like a village shop, the steward may be discovered by sisters and others in difficulties, sitting in his counting house, counting up the money.

Then right at the bottom of the picture, garlanded with marrows, beans, pumpkins, peas and potatoes (that crown the untiring gardening efforts of the orderlies) observe the white-washed laundry, where through rising steam Mme. Pattefour stirs a mass of clammy sheets in the copper, while her four assistants, some screaming French war songs very high and thin, some chattering low Flemish, scrub and mangle nightshirts upon nightshirts, but never silent for one moment.

vi. The Paynims.

But we cannot leave this place which combines now in so strange a manner the characteristics of a clearing station, a Naval sick-bay and a local infirmary, without visiting the tract of sand in which the latest acquisition of the " Queen

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Alexandra " is stored. Not content with accumulating in one building, French soldiers and marines, Algerians, English and Colonial soldiers, sailors and airmen, this cosmopolitan establishment has now contrived to cater for sick and wounded Chinese, Egyptians, and pitch-black negroes from the West Indies.

Three large marquees, painted protectively with parrots, pards, dogs, frogs, rabbits, squirrels and bananas, designed to repel the artless Hun, stand in an annexe to the hospital. The centre one of these contains within its flapping canvas a medley throng of these labourers from overseas, black, brown and yellow. Passing through a small tent that serves as kitchen for this ward, one is confronted by two rows of grinning faces. But there is small cause for amusement here, and a sudden realisation of the tragic circumstances of these simple people, induced to leave their now remote homes, to endure hardships which they have not deserved and dangers they can ill comprehend, can hardly fail to produce a sense of pity, which longs to bridge the gulf of race and language, and see them treated as human beings for once. Observe then one of the indispensable boons of the " Queen Alexandra's " new labours, one Mr. " Wu-hu " from Cathay, the orderly of the ward, discoursing in fluent familiarity with one of the acquaintances of his Eastern childhood : nor fail to mark—as by his length you are bound to do—the tall physician at the end of the tent, who, having stirred up a revolution in Russia, has returned to the familiar plains of Flanders to combine his medical ministrations with a course of instruction in Arabic, learnt at first-hand from a tubercular Egyptian.

vii. Depart the Visitor.

But it is time to leave this crowd of sheds and corridors and tents, which seem to have grown up haphazard on what was once the rubbish-heap of the town. It has left a confused impression on our visitor. It differs from other military hospitals, but how, it is difficult if not impossible to express. Phrases like " a magnificent co-ordination," " harmonious unity," " faultless machine," " perfect co-operation," and so forth, to which the newspaper correspondent has such frequent recourse in describing this or that department of a great medical service, are here singularly inept. There is a certain baffling casualness of working and arrangement, and even of ground-planning, which combined with the mixed types of the inmates, and the intimate domesticity which seems alike to govern the lives of patients, nurses and orderlies, that causes the stranger extreme embarrassment in an endeavour to classify the place.

In truth, the " Queen Alexandra " is *not* part of a smoothly-running system, is *not* ordained to meet a specific need in a specific manner ; cannot, in fact, be harnessed to any generalities whatever. For good or for ill it has come to stay, upon this little triangle of ground in Malo. It is ready—as it has been for two years and a half, to meet a succession of emergencies as they occur. If a typhoid epidemic breaks out, or the Navy bristles with—er, Continental—measles, or Egyptian labourers are lacerated with bombs ; or if a battalion goes bathing and is stung by jelly-fish, or a company comes down from the line alive with vermin ; or if pilots return with broken legs from a fight in the air, or a

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new army appears one morning with forty " debility " cases, worn out with heat and forced marches—if any of these calamities happen, either severally or at once, *there* is the " Alexandra " with open doors. There are the ready surgeons, the bustling office staff, the lively nurses, the imperturbable orderlies to cope with what may come. And mark that these strange people, though they have done this now for years, are still—you may see it beneath the thin veneer of boredom—are still excited with every new " rush," still thrilled as with the novelty of a great adventure.

So if a newspaper correspondent desires a neat explanation of this phenomenon in the summer of 1917, we should teach him to say, that, even as there is said to be one family of Dodoes still extant on the further side of the Andes, so here is to be found, seemingly alone in Christendom, all that remains of a species called extinct—" the Voluntary System."

The Casualty Clearing Station, Poperinghe: 1915.

It is hardly necessary to say more than a few words of this short-lived venture, undertaken at a moment of grave military crisis, and from its necessarily improvised nature scarcely likely to have a chance of proving a success. During the Second Battle of Ypres in April, 1915, the Unit was asked to provide a number of beds for the wounded of the British Second Army. The Château Elisabeth Hospital at Poperinghe was accordingly cleared as far as possible of its patients, and further accommodation found in the town itself, at No. 29, Rue d'Ypres. With beds and stretchers it was possible to provide for over sixty patients, but the attempt to function as a casualty clearing station, though it had the sanction of officers on the spot, was from the first " out of order " from the point of view of the higher administration.

On April 26th, however, the section began its work, and did what it could to help to cope with the terrible stream of casualties from the salient. On the next morning 5 officers and 40 men were admitted to the Château. On the same day Poperinghe was heavily bombarded, the British medical formations began to leave the town, and the patients at 29, Rue d'Ypres were transferred to the Château; the Unit staff remained to look after stragglers. After the 29th only a few military cases were received, but the need of surgical aid for the surviving civilians once more became urgent, many such wounded being sent in from Dr. Fox's dressing-station at the Augustine Straat. At the end of the month, on account of its rather anomalous position, orders were received to admit civilians only, and the Château reverted to its former sphere of activity. But during these few crowded days, a total of 185 British military cases had been treated.

No. 3 British Red Cross Hospital, Abbeville.

When it was decided to close down the St. Pierre Hospital towards the end of June, 1915, the Unit was invited by Sir Arthur Lawley, the British Red Cross Society's Commissioner, to provide the staff for their British military

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hospital opened some time back at Abbeville. At a conference at Boulogne on the last day of June it was arranged that the staff from the Villa St. Pierre, with a few changes, should be transferred to No. 3 B.R.C. Hospital, Abbeville. The change had to be made in stages, so that the work of the hospital should be disturbed as little as possible, and by July 23rd the transference was completed by the arrival of the Unit's nurses and the taking over of administration by the P.M.O.

Abbeville was then, as throughout the war, an important military centre, the Headquarters of the Lines of Communication administration; and in those days it was a pleasant and lively town, practically immune from the attentions of enemy aircraft which later wrought so much havoc among its interesting streets. The hospital was situated in a large house in the Rue St. Gilles, a few minutes' walk from the centre of the town. Entering through the ivy-clad *porte-cochère*, one faced a handsome mansion in the traditional style of the French provincial town, with a cobbled courtyard in front, and on the left a block of stable buildings. Behind the house lay an attractive garden, where in summer the orderlies' tents were pitched under the trees, and with two isolation tents standing further away. The largest rooms in the building served as wards, the others providing an operating theatre, X-ray room, dispensary, and nurses' quarters. One of the wards was distinguished by a title, the "Northampton Ward," a monthly subscription being provided by that town towards the cost of its upkeep. Two ambulances and their drivers were attached to the hospital by the Unit to provide its transport and to help in the general ambulance work of the district. For the greater part of the six months following, Dr. A. H. Fardon was in charge of the hospital, with Miss de Wind as Matron, and the hospital was attached to No. 5 Stationary Hospital, also in the town.

Work was started with 50 beds, including 10 for officers, receiving sick from the numerous military camps in the Abbeville district, and wounded put off the ambulance trains on their way to the base, most of these cases being left at Abbeville station as unfit to travel further. During the latter part of September, the capacity of the hospital was taxed to its utmost by the heavy casualties resulting from the battle of Loos, and by various expedients 25 additional beds were organised. But after this offensive had died down, work resumed its normal level. During this busy period the hospital staff had to mourn the death from acute illness of one of its number, Maurice Barker, who died on September 29th at the early age of eighteen. But a few excerpts from a diary kept at the hospital show a few events standing out from the daily routine:—

October 3rd. The worst of the rush after the Loos fighting seems to be over, but we have still a number of very serious cases on our hands. . . . A dental clinic has been established, with Bevan W. Neave in charge. As there is at present no other dentist in Abbeville he is likely to have a busy time. . . .

October 12th. . . . the first air raid since we have been here came off the other day. One bomb dropped quite near, and one piece flew in through a window. . . . An orderlies' billet is being found in the *presbytère* over the way; with this cold weather it is not necessary to stay in tents when indoor billets can be obtained without difficulty.

October 31st. . . . we celebrated the Unit's first anniversary with a supper of admirable variety.

November 12th. . . . bronchitis, nephritis, rheumatism, kicks from mules—these are the scourges that beset the camps round here.

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Meanwhile the large new Army hospital (No. 2 Stationary) was steadily approaching completion, and by December it was seen that " No. 3 " would probably not be required much longer. The increased amount of official accommodation was nowadays bringing the need for small auxiliary hospitals to an end. Both patients and staff were enabled to celebrate Christmas successfully, and these festivities almost marked the conclusion of the hospital's career. For it was shortly afterwards that the admissions ceased and preparations for closing down were begun. On January 8th, 1916, the hospital was finally closed and many of the staff returned to the Unit's Headquarters, although the dental clinic remained attached to No. 2 Stationary Hospital until its dental surgeon had arrived. By the 13th the work of clearing up had been completed and the buildings were handed over to become the Headquarters of the Army Railway Transport Department. The total number of patients treated at " No. 3 " during the Unit's tenure was 1,555.

Conclusion.

The nature of the book in which the present lines appear hardly permits of any detailed account of the surgical and medical aspects of the hospitals which we have described. But there could be little doubt that their wards gave ample opportunities for observation and experience in many directions. Reference has been made elsewhere to the value of the Unit's civilian hospitals in Belgium during the first winter of the war in affording some insight into the peculiar character of the typhoid epidemic which spread through Flanders at the end of 1914; and similar medical evidence was gained among the early convoys of French military patients admitted to the Queen Alexandra Hospital immediately after its opening.

But before bringing this chapter to an end, it may not be out of place to remind the reader of the very considerable amount of organising and administrative work which the establishment and maintenance of these hospitals entailed. In these days when the activities of the war have made so many men and women more or less familiar with the inner workings of hospital life, there is no need to describe details of the machinery. The St. Pierre Hospital, Malo, presented many difficulties simply by reason of its being the Unit's first experiment in the abnormal conditions of the war-zone. But before long many valuable lessons of organisation were learnt, and in the establishment of the Queen Alexandra Hospital a few months later they were not forgotten. Both of these hospitals depended very largely for their efficient running on the sound organisation of the Headquarters departments of the Unit, since they received practically all their supplies through the latter. The hospital at Abbeville was in an easier position, in that its general arrangements had already been in working order for some time before they were put into the hands of a Unit staff. The business of supply at a large British centre such as Abbeville was fairly straightforward, and the duties of administration in the treatment of British patients were clearly formulated. At the " Queen Alexandra," on the

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other hand, the task of supplying all the everyday necessities of the hospital fell on the Unit itself. Food had to be obtained from various sources, partly from British and French military stores, partly in the local markets. Drugs and medical equipment came for the most part from London through the Unit Stores Department. The numerous calls for repairs, structural alterations, and transport had all to be met by the Unit departments concerned. Here, too, there was the added complexity of administration for patients belonging to several different nationalities and Services. The small office staff had to wrestle with the forms and returns—not to mention the telephones—of the French Army and the three British Services, and had to contrive as well means of dealing now with merchant seamen, now with American sailors, now with chance civilians. Compared with the duties of the doctors, nurses, and orderlies, who were brought into close touch with their patients, the work of those who were responsible for supplies and other auxiliary services was often a thankless one. But without the forethought and energy of these latter, the task of healing might often have been sadly hampered.

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Plate XVI G. W. YOUNG.

H. NOCKOLDS. Facing p. 88.

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CHAPTER IV

THE FRENCH CONVOYS.

THE full story of the three *Sections Sanitaires Anglaises* Nos. 13, 14, and 19, which were staffed by the Friends' Ambulance Unit and worked with the French Armies in the field throughout the greater part of the war, would form perhaps the most vivid and varied chapter in the Unit's history. For it was their fortune not only to carry on their ambulance work in many different sectors up and down the whole length of the Western front, but to share more regularly than most branches the vicissitudes and ardours of the life of the soldiers themselves. Between them the three Convoys had experience of most of the principal French military operations during the war; they knew something of the dreary months of stationary warfare through 1915 and 1916, of the 1917 offensives, of the dark days of retreat in the following year, and finally of the sustained attacks and hurried advances which led to the end of the war late in that autumn. Such duties as those of the Convoys, made from time to time a call on the fullest endurance of their members, and several gave up their lives in this service; but it may be recorded, without undue pride, that their work was carried out loyally and efficiently. If proof were required of the satisfaction of the authorities under whose direction they worked, it would be enough to point to the honours bestowed on the Convoys and on many of their individual members by the French Army itself.

But a fully detailed account of the life and movements of S.S.A.'s 13, 14, and 19 would fill almost the whole of the present volume, and we must content ourselves with a general sketch of their origins and composition, and some description of the outstanding features in the career of each. Even if their Odyssey is thus abbreviated, it may suffice to show the nature of Convoy work and its place in the history of the Unit as a whole.

What then was the composition of a Section? In their final form the Unit Convoys were modelled on the same lines as the regular French military *Sections Sanitaires*, alongside of which they worked, and with which indeed they were interchangeable. Each had a total of twenty-two ambulances, two of which were regarded as being in reserve, so that one or two at a time might be "off the road" for overhaul or repair without interfering with the full working strength of twenty cars. At first the ambulances presented a troublesome diversity of types, but by the early months of 1917 they had been standardised in each Convoy, to the great advantage of drivers and mechanics alike. Thus the cars of S.S.A. 13 were all "Vulcans," presented to the British Red Cross

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Society by the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Coal Miners and Owners. On S.S.A. 14 they were "Buicks," with a bewildering variety of donors' names on their sides, such as the Fiji Islanders, the Hellenic Community of London, the London Borough Hop Trade, and the Putney Habitation of the Primrose League. A fleet of 22 "Vulcans" made up the strength of S.S.A. 19's cars. Over and above its ambulances, each Section had a kitchen-car (*camion cuisine*), fitted up with a small range, water-tank, filter, and the like, and a workshop-car, one of the most valuable and indispensable features in a Convoy's establishment. These *ateliers* were equipped with a power-driven lathe, drilling-machine, lifting jib and tackle, and much other serviceable plant. Under a canvas extension at the rear of the van a car could safely be dismantled, and almost any class of repair or overhaul could be undertaken on the Section itself, without having to fall back on the French *Parcs Automobiles*, which, though always available for repair purposes, were apt to cause delays. There were also on each Convoy a touring-car, a light lorry, and one or two motor-cycles.

So much for the mechanical element; in personnel the total strength of a Section amounted to fifty-six men. The officer-in-charge, known officially as the *Chef-Adjoint*, along with his *Sous-Chef* and an assistant, was responsible for the general administration of the Convoy. In charge of the important branch of commissariat was a Steward, who dealt with the drawing of the French rations and any supplements thereto obtained from the Unit's Headquarters, or purchased locally if necessary. To assist him in the disposal of his supplies he had permanent cooks, and a squad drawn from the drivers in daily rotation for the necessary cleaning and orderly work. But the bulk of the personnel consisted of the drivers. To each car a driver was definitely assigned; and in most cases an *aide-conducteur* as well, who helped with the work on the car, acted as *convoyeur*, drove occasionally, and was responsible for the ambulance in question when its regular driver was not available or when a double turn of duty was necessary. The small staff of skilled mechanics, a few storekeepers and clerks, and a despatch rider made up the total of the Unit personnel.

From the administrative standpoint, a Section was regarded as a unit of the French Army. As such it drew rations on its own account, debited against it in the books of the 20e *Escadron de Train* at Versailles. To control this side a French commissioned officer was attached to each Section, who was responsible to the French authorities for the proper use of Army supplies, and acted as liaison-officer with the *Direction des Services Automobiles*. He brought with him a French warrant-officer (*maréchal de logis*), a cook, two drivers and a touring car.

Holding as they did this recognised status in the French establishments, each man on the Convoys was entitled to receive the *prestations en deniers et en nature attribuées aux hommes de troupe francais;* that is to say, to an ordinary soldier's rations, a *boni* of 20 centimes (2d.) to be spent on vegetables, a *solde* of 25 centimes (2½d.) usually spent on vegetables or billeting. Latterly a higher *solde* was paid when men were working in the advanced zone. The amounts thus received from the French were paid into a common Convoy fund and used

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for the purpose of supplementary foodstuffs to help out the regular ration; for the latter, if satisfying the needs of the said *homme de troupe français*, did not always meet the requirements of Allied palates. Further, the Convoys were enabled to draw practically all the supplies necessary for the running and upkeep of their cars from the French Army *parcs*, petrol, oil, paraffin, tyres, sparking plugs, and the simpler types of spare parts or renewals, such as springs. In the earlier days of the Sections the Unit supplied certain necessary parts, particularly the larger and more complicated ones, timing-gear wheels, connecting rods, and the like, and also stocks of paint and the renewals of workshop equipment. But in February, 1916, S.S.A. 13 became entitled to draw on the Dennis-Bayley Fund for the upkeep of cars presented by that institution, and after the early part of 1917 all three Convoys, with the " F.U." Groupement at Dunkirk, were able to receive similar assistance from the British Red Cross Society. These prosaic details of ways and means may seem superfluous, but they serve to show how much the Unit was helped by the generosity of other organisations. Over an average period the supplies drawn from the French *parcs* and the British Red Cross Society amounted together to about 96 per cent. of the total running costs.

Having worked through all these details of their constitution, the reader may be pardoned if he impatiently asks what the Convoys did, besides repairing their cars, drawing their rations, and using up their spare parts. But it would be unfair to embark on a description of the careers of the Sections without a few lines on the system on which the French Army Medical Service was based. The Convoys were an integral part of the *Service de Santé*, and some of the terms employed may require explanation. Briefly, the arrangement for dealing with casualties in the line was as follows. First of all there came, as close as possible behind the actual firing line, the *postes de secours*. These might be situated at any distance from two or three hundred yards to two or three thousand yards behind the front line, and to them the wounded were brought in by the regimental stretcher-bearers. At the *postes* the first field-dressings were made, and patients were passed on to a *poste de triage* further back, where they were sorted out according to the severity of their injuries, and if necessary had their wounds re-dressed. From the *triage* the lightly-wounded men were sent to an *ambulance*, from which they could be returned to their units as soon as well enough; the more serious casualties went on to the nearest *Hôpital d'Evacuation* (*Hô. E.*), which corresponded in function with the casualty clearing station of the British system. Here they could be cared for until well enough to be passed on to hospitals for full treatment in the interior. Each Division of the French Army had its medical service organised on these lines, and the *Section Sanitaire* attached to it performed all the work of transporting cases by car as far as the *Hô. E.* In the earlier days of the war, the transport from the front line *postes* to the *triage* was done by the Divisional stretcher-bearers (*Brancardiers Divisionnaires*), either on foot or with small wheeled trolleys (*brouettes*) or in horse ambulances. But from 1915 onwards the cars of the Sections were called on to do the evacuation from the aid-posts to the *triage*, as well as from the latter stage down to the *Hô. E.*

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The Unit's ambulances were among the first cars to do this aid-post work when, under the strain of the Second Battle of Ypres, the older method broke down. And without doubt it was the most interesting work in the Convoy's routine. As a rule, when conditions on the front were normal, the cars so engaged were sent up in 24-hour shifts to a couple or more of the most important *postes*, two or three to each. There they waited until casualties came in, when they were loaded up and sent down to the *triage*. Where the *triage* was situated near the *postes*, as it was on the Woesten sector, so long worked by S.S.A. 13, an out-station could be established at the former, composed of from six to ten cars, relieved in rotation every fortnight or three weeks. Regular nightly evacuations could then be carried out, but as the *triage* and *postes* were in communication, cars could be summoned by telephone up to the *postes* to take down urgent cases unable to wait till night.

But it is hard to describe the daily routine of Convoy life in outlines which cover all its numerous vicissitudes and improvisations. The out-stations especially varied in character, having to adapt their daily programme of work to local requirements. Generally speaking, the duties of drivers there had so often to be performed during the night time or in the early morning, that it was impracticable to hold regular inspections of all the cars together, or even to fix hard and fast hours for meals. But at the Section headquarters life was more regular, with breakfast at 7 o'clock and an inspection of sleeping billets at 8, followed by that of the interiors of all cars. The ambulances there were divided, when possible, into those on duty and those having " a day off," which really meant being thoroughly cleaned and having their mechanical needs attended to. Some of the cars on duty would go off on routine jobs, evacuating *ambulances* or *Hô. E.'s*, or perhaps reinforcing the cars at the out-stations ; others would be held in reserve to deal in rotation with any orders that might come in. Usually at 4 o'clock in the afternoon the second inspection of the cars would be held. It was obviously of the greatest importance that mechanically the cars should be kept up to the highest possible pitch of reliability. No one could afford to take risks by any lack of care which might involve even a partial failure to meet the obligations placed on the Convoy. The daily inspection had accordingly to be a thorough one. It was thus often the practice to select one important feature of the cars' structure for special examination each day. Once this was over, the rest of the day was so far as possible left free for men to spend as they liked.

Recreation varied, of course, with season and locality. Sometimes the opportunities for football or cricket and other outdoor games were few and far between, at others it was possible to have fairly regular practice and occasional matches with other teams, French, English, or American. And indoor recreation too depended mainly on one's surroundings or the billets of the moment. Sometimes men might be living actually in their cars, parked up on some muddy roadside, and at these times the field of " indoor " pastimes was distinctly narrowed. But good billets meant that one could pass one's leisure hours in a variety of ways, from sing-songs round the fire to full-fledged concerts, or

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from heated debate of the great events of the day to the light-hearted exchange of Convoy or Divisional gossip. When circumstances made such experiments possible, classes in various subjects were organised, and the formation of libraries on the Convoys was an unforgettable advantage: though one Section had perforce to jettison its valued collection during the 1918 retreats.

But to do justice to the social life of the Convoys and to re-create for the reader something of that Convoy spirit which gave to each Section its distinctive character, would take up more space than this chronicle, which has so many plain facts to record, could afford. We turn to describe the early days of the motor ambulance work and its development into the complete *Sections Sanitaires Anglaises* of later times.

Early Days of the Convoys.

It is hardly necessary to tell again the story of how the Unit first got a footing in the front area by its happy discovery of Woesten early in November, 1914. In a previous chapter we saw how a great diversity of ambulance work, military and civilian, branched out from that small beginning, and it is Woesten which the French Convoys must regard as their birthplace. Motor ambulance work did not figure largely among the original intentions of the Unit before a first-hand acquaintance with war conditions was gained after landing in France. The whole motor ambulance organisation in the Army medical services was, in fact, only in its infancy in 1914, and the value of the half-dozen "Mors" ambulance cars which the original party brought over in October, 1914, was only fully realised when it was seen how large a field of work they opened up. For the loan of these cars, some of which continued in active service right down to the end of the war, the Unit was placed under a great obligation to the British Red Cross Society.

The services originally offered to the medical authorities of the 87th French Division at Woesten were those of a dressing-station unit. But it was soon discovered that what the French in that part of the line needed most was motor ambulance transport. Scarcely had the small fleet of Unit cars arrived and installed itself at the convent school, when three of the "Mors" ambulances were sent off to Elverdinghe to bring in wounded who had come down from beyond the Yser. All the rest of the day they were kept busily running collecting cases or evacuating others to Poperinghe, and twice during the first night long and arduous trips were made to Furnes, which at that time was an important railhead. Needless to say, the work was taken up with the utmost enthusiasm and with unstinted energy, and the French, not slow to note this keenness, let it be known that the Unit's out-station was as useful and welcome as it was unofficial. After a very short experience, they realised that these British volunteers could be relied on to carry out orders with accuracy and punctuality. As a result, the Unit's party was given definite responsibilities in the Divisional medical service, and the men themselves were thoroughly happy to be at last engaged on such work and installed within range of the German guns.

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The Unit's arrival coincided with the end of the great outflanking movement, and the holding of the Germans on the Yser line. The series of violent actions that followed, from the sea to the salient, made the first few weeks a period of ceaseless work and rapid development. Soon after the Unit had landed in France, the Hon. Lionel Holland arrived with a convoy of " four-stretcher " cars manned by professional drivers. He went to the *Quartier Général* of the Eighth Army, and officially put his services at their disposal. After some delay, work was allotted, though not of a very exacting nature. Apart from the base at Dunkirk the two chief stations were at Steenvoorde and Poperinghe. While negotiations were still in hand with the French authorities, the Unit leaders had approached Mr. Holland and suggested that, in the areas where their men were already in touch with the situation, the two formations might well collaborate. It therefore came about that the Unit supplied the officers, and the B.R.C.S. the drivers, for a station at Poperinghe, and on December 2nd the first official motor ambulance work for the French Army began.

The cars at Poperinghe were attached to *Hô. E.* 15, under a friendly officer of the French Colonial Army, Colonel Pouy, and there did the railhead work for two Army Corps, the 9th and 32nd. This was their official function, but the Unit had already learnt at Woesten how much work there was waiting to be done nearer the battle line. Further, they realised that Divisional authorties, faced with the alternative of having practically no motor ambulances, were only too anxious to utilise the services of men and cars who could be relied on to provide a rapid and efficient system of transport, even if their official status might not bear too close a scrutiny. As, therefore, the resources of the Unit grew, its activities in this direction increased, but, it must always be borne in mind, along lines which, however valuable and necessary, were distinctly unauthorised. Almost at the very beginning the Poperinghe Convoy was sufficiently numerous to tackle more than the immediate *Hô. E.* work. The wounded of one of the Corps, the 32nd, came down from Vandenbusch and Dickebusch, the medical centres of its two Divisions, the 31st and 32nd. Not only was the journey from these places slow and painful, but the wounded came in there more quickly than they could be evacuated to the *Hô. E.* As practical men, the *Médecins Divisionnaires* were not going to do without valuable assistance because it was not quite duly authorised, and so cars officially sent up to do *Hô. E.* work found themselves sent to work for Divisions, and stations (each of three ambulances) were started at Vandenbusch with the 32nd Division on December 9th, and at Dickebusch with the 31st Division on December 15th.

By a similar process a station was opened at Ypres on December 10th for the 9th Army Corps, whose Divisions, the 38th and 42nd were in the salient, and whose wounded likewise passed through the *Hô. E.* 15. Cars from this station—at one time as many as eight—collected cases from dressing-stations close behind the line at such places as Potyze, St. Jean, and Bedford Château, on the Lille road, and brought them down to Poperinghe. Another car station, a development from Woesten was opened on December 14th at Oostvleteren, about six kilometres further north along the Furnes road.

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Towards the end of December, 1914, the Unit drivers could feel thoroughly gratified by this increasing reliance upon their services. They had unexpectedly hit upon and developed work which suited them admirably, and was admittedly a useful contribution to the Army medical organisation. The twenty-four cars, working from some six stations at varying distances behind the lines, had by Christmas carried nearly 1,800 cases and run 10,000 kilometres. Either officially or unofficially excellent relations had been established with the medical authorities of several Divisions and Corps. In appreciation of the drivers' efforts during an episode of the heavy fighting towards the end of 1914, a flattering letter of thanks had been received from Contre-Amiral Ronarch, commanding the famous *Fusiliers Marins*. Unfortunately, this rapid growth was not so sure as it was satisfactory, and the motor ambulance work with the French Army suffered a discouraging set-back on December 24th. On that day definite orders were received by the Unit to withdraw their Convoys from Dickebusch and Vandenbusch, and soon afterwards most of the remaining cars working directly for Divisions had to be recalled. At the time the disappointment was keen, and the collapse of so much work of which the Unit had become most proud was unexpectedly sudden. In point of fact, the cause was a very obvious one. The regular Army formations had become more adequately prepared to deal with the situation ; simultaneously a lull had occurred in the fighting, and, as always happens in such circumstances, discipline was stiffened, irregular developments that had sprung up to meet immediate needs were noticed and brought into line, and, as rapidly as the proper Army machinery could take on the work unaided, the Unit's unofficial out-stations were withdrawn.

The responsibility for Poperinghe, the one station that had been officially allotted to the Unit, remained, and there was also a good deal of other work for the cars to do, for with the chameleon-like versatility that characterised the Unit, civilian activities were developed as military work decreased. The cars which shortly before had been carrying French wounded were almost at once turned on to collecting civilian typhoid cases in practically the same areas. Thanks to its adaptability then, the Unit was not without occupation, but the attraction of work for Divisions close to the trenches could not be forgotten, and every effort was made to find a way back to it.

Though the Army authorities withdrew the Unit's cars, it was because their position was irregular, not because they were dissatisfied with the services they had rendered. They were, on the contrary, impressed by the businesslike manner in which these services had been carried out, and in February, 1915, in order to retain the Unit's assistance, they formed its cars, together with those under the Hon. Lionel Holland, into Convoys officially designated S.S.A.'s 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, and *Parc*. A French officer at Army Headquarters was also appointed to see to their needs. Except for S.S.A. 15 and the *Parc*, which were definitely not confined to military work, and were much larger than the others, each Convoy consisted of eight ambulances—S.S.A. 14 being staffed entirely by the F.A.U., and S.S.A. 13 partially. So far as the French were concerned

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however, no new work arose from this reorganisation; S.S.A. 13 and the B.R.C.S. Sections remained at Poperinghe and other railheads; S.S.A. 14, to the regret of all, had orders to remain week after week *en repos* at Dunkirk, as a Section in reserve. Officially this state of affairs with one Section *en repos*, continued unchanged for nearly two months. But ambulances divided into specific Sections on paper were in practice grouped very differently, and far from being idle in reserve, the cars of the Sections were pooled with those of the Unit in general and distributed as circumstances required.

In the middle of April an order was received for S.S.A. 14 to report to the 45th Algerian Division at Elverdinghe, and the much desired Divisional work was started once more. It was not, however, the cars numbered S.S.A. 14, No. 1, S.S.A. 14, No. 2, and so on, that were sent to Elverdinghe, these particular vehicles being mostly engaged at the moment on other work. To have kept them, as was on paper their function, sitting at the base for two months, would have meant that all the drivers would have gone home—a contingency which always had to be borne in mind in those days. Instead of S.S.A. 14, the ambulances that could most easily be spared in the area controlled from Poperinghe were called upon, and the cars so dispatched were able to deal with the work to the complete satisfaction of the *Médecin Divisionnaire*. Though forming a very mixed Convoy at Elverdinghe, these cars were duly carrying out their routine evacuations when, with scarcely a moment's warning, the Second Battle of Ypres threw the line into confusion.

The cars and men of the station were overwhelmed by the crowds of wounded and the victims of the then unprecedented and terrifying gas attack, who staggered back from the deadly clouds, or lay alongside the roads in unforgettable rows. The tide of battle rolled back almost on to the *ambulance*, and the Château in which the Convoy had its headquarters, found itself faced by a great breach in the lines, through which the Germans, had they known it, could have poured unhindered. But the cars ran unceasingly, evacuating as fast as possible down to the railhead, and then, without pause, returning to Elverdinghe. They knew that at any time it might be in enemy hands. To make matters worse, the railhead was driven further away by shell fire, and the horse ambulance service which previously had worked between the *postes de secours* and the *ambulance*, broke down under the continuous and unexpected strain. At the request of the *Médecin Divisionnaire*, this service was undertaken as well, adding still more to the already heavy burden of work. For the first seventy-two hours most of the original cars and drivers worked without a break, but their utmost efforts could make little impression on the endless flow of *blessés* and *asphyxiés*. However, by that time, fuller resources in men and material were on the spot to deal adequately with the situation.

From the Sections attached to various hospitals, every available car and man that could be spared was withdrawn. At the same time Headquarters and the civilian stations made a great effort and ran with the lowest possible number, so that drivers and cars could be rushed up to the help of the 45th Division. As a result, by the third day nearly 40 cars were running, and there were enough

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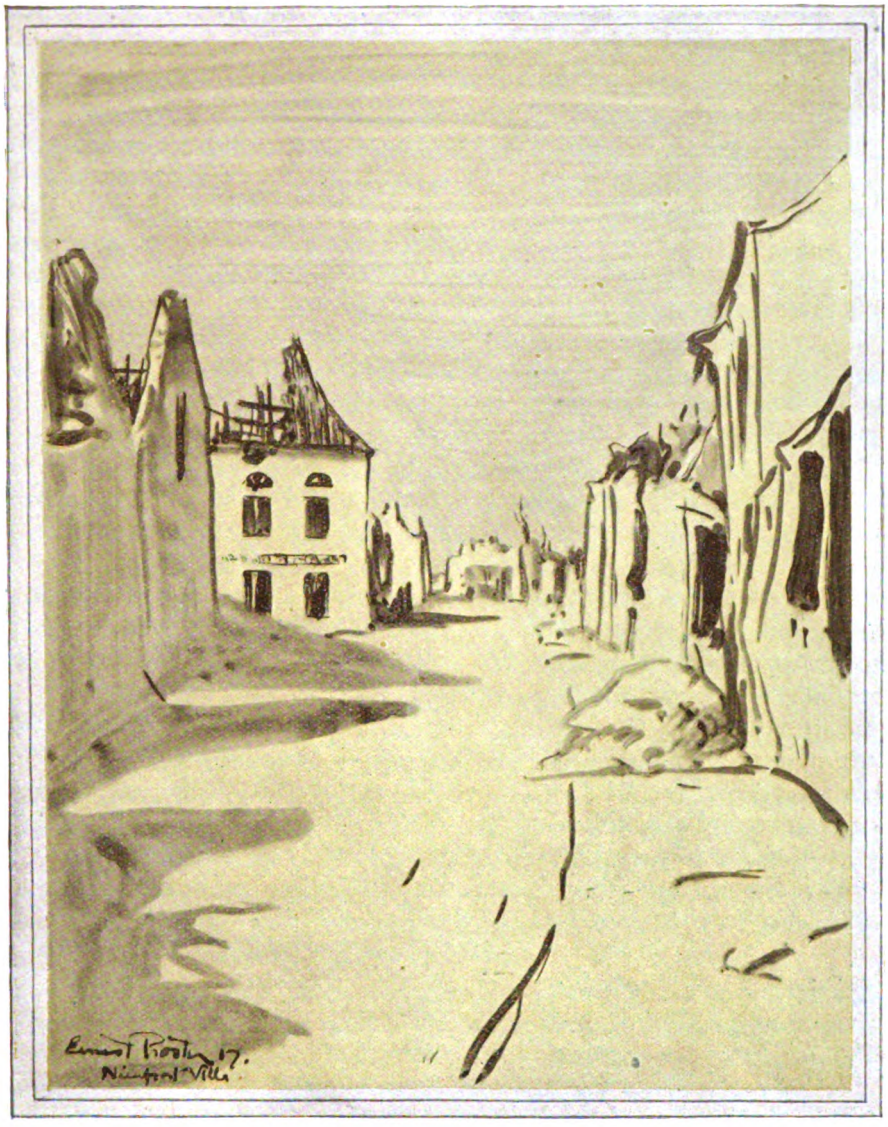

Plate XVII POSTE DE SECOURS, NIEUPORT-VILLE. Facing p. 96

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drivers to form two shifts, so that each car could work continuously the whole of the twenty-four hours. In addition to this, aid was received from some "Ford" ambulances of an American Section. By these means it was just possible to keep pace with the demands, and on one day 920 cases were carried, despite the distance of the railhead from the *postes* and the constant shelling of the roads. During these operations the Unit sustained its first casualty, Donald Allen, and for the first time its cars really suffered from shell-fire.

Although the most insistent call on the Unit's motor transport during the momentous spring of 1915 came from the 45th Division, simultaneous demands from other directions strained its resources to the utmost. The amount of work to be done at the various hospitals and evacuation stations naturally increased proportionately with the heaviness of the fighting. In not a single instance was a call unfulfilled, though the staffs were in most cases considerably depleted. In one case, one of the Unit Sections was twice called upon within a few days, to remove a complete hospital, *Hô. E.* 15, owing to shell fire. The Section attached to this hospital from December, 1914, to May, 1915, alone carried nearly 15,000 patients, and ran 60,000 kilometres, being especially busy during the heavy fighting towards the end of 1914 and during the Second Battle of Ypres. During these strenuous times there were many difficulties of supplies and communications. On the organisation of the Convoys in February, the French authorities had agreed to supply, at their Dunkirk base, the petrol required for work on these cars, and to indemnify voluntary Sections to a certain extent for the expenses incurred in their upkeep. There was, however, no attempt to bring the Sections into line with Army organisations on the matter of *ravitaillement* generally. All supplies, therefore, had to come from the base, and this at times presented a harassing, though never an insoluble, problem.

When the Germans gave up the vain attempt to break through at Ypres, and the violent counter-attacks of the Allies ceased with the recapture of the lost ground, the service gradually became less severe and eventually the Convoy, with the 45th Division, was relieved. Further, while work resumed its normal dimensions at the military stations, the decrease in the typhoid epidemic, and the lull in the fighting, were reflected in a reduced demand for transport from the Unit's civilian hospitals and out-stations.

For the second time the motor ambulance work of the Unit now took a rather discouraging turn. It seemed doubtful whether there would ever again be operations by the French on that part of the front serious enough to call for the assistance of the Unit's ambulances, and hospital evacuation services very far back from the line appeared to be the only prospect. At this juncture the F.A.U. passed through a critical phase. The less enthusiastic members went home; others cast their eyes towards Italy; and various openings for the services of those drivers who remained were examined with uneasy diligence. It was decided to reorganise the cars of S.S.A.'s 13 and 14. This was facilitated by the withdrawal of all the B.R.C.S. personnel and many of its cars from this area. S.S.A.'s 11 and 12 disappeared, while 13 and 14 were staffed entirely by the

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F.A.U., and were increased to twelve ambulances each (June 15th). In the end, the patience of those who remained was rewarded, and a period of stagnation ended in the Unit cars returning, this time permanently, to the front. Towards the end of June, S.S.A. 14, which had been rusticating for a while, attached to hospitals at Bourbourg and Bergues, received orders to proceed to Coxyde and there to share with two other Sections the work of the Nieuport sector. Simultaneously S.S.A. 13 was ordered to carry on all the work at the *Hô. E.* 10 and the other hospitals around Dunkirk. S.S.A. 15 continued as before to contain cars engaged on non-military work, and S.S.A. *Parc* was detailed for general Unit administration.

For several months these arrangements of the cars remained unchanged. On October 24th a surprise visit to the Unit was received from Captain Dumenc and Lieutenant Duboin, who, under Commandant Girard, at that time controlled the *Direction des Services Automobiles* at the *Grand Quartier Général.* They expressed themselves as very pleased with everything they saw, and presumably telephoned their approbation to *G.Q.G.* As a result of this visit, the Unit was asked to come in under the revised scheme for non-military formations working at the front, and again to reorganise its Sections. Thanks to the generosity of the British Red Cross Society, the Unit was enabled to accept the offer, and in December, 1915, to re-form S.S.A.'s 13 and 14 according to the new scheme, in which each Section was to have an active strength of twenty ambulances, with attendant cars and lorries as already detailed above. Each Convoy was to be attached in future to a Division, and to form in itself an administrative unit of the French Army for the purpose of drawing rations, billeting, and other necessary arrangements. A French Lieutenant was to supervise these matters, and be responsible, with the Unit's *Chef de Section,* for the efficient working of the service and the carrying out of all orders. There was some unavoidable delay in the delivery of the required cars, but by the spring of 1916, S.S.A. 13 had its full complement of " Vulcan " ambulances, and S.S.A. 14 of " Argylls " (later to be exchanged for " Buicks "), together with their supplementary vans, tourers, and lorries.

The new scheme was not entirely without drawbacks. In place of being directly and solely answerable to the *Médecin Divisionnaire* of the Division for which it was working, the officer in charge of each Convoy now had to share his responsibility with a French Lieutenant. For both this created a delicate situation; the division of duties was frequently a difficult matter, and at times Convoy officers who had worked under the old conditions found the new somewhat galling. In this they were not alone. The British Red Cross Convoys under Colonel Barry, who had already a fine record of service to their credit, were simultaneously brought in under the new scheme. And they too felt that the proposed regulations were needlessly severe and perhaps ungenerous, especially in view of the work that had already been accomplished without dual control, to the complete satisfaction of the authorities. Joint action was decided on, and together the two groups of Convoys made a protest through the Commissioner of the British Red Cross Society, and through the Director

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General of Medical Services of the British Armies at G.H.Q., to the French authorities at *G.Q.G.* It was pointed out that these Convoys were much more business-like organisations than those ordinarily associated with voluntary enterprise; also that, authorised by the Quartermaster General, and with their personnel sanctioned by the Adjutant General, they were working under the regulations of the British Army, and were definitely a part of the Expeditionary Force. Ultimately, in view of the past experience, efficiency, and official status of the F.A.U. and B.R.C.S. Convoys, conditions were modified as far as they were concerned in a "protocol" to the original arrangement. Further, to facilitate matters on the question of control, honorary commissions in the British Army were given to the Section leaders of the B.R.C.S. Convoys; this, however, though debated on several occasions, it was considered impolitic to carry out on the Unit's Convoys.

Shortly after its reorganisation, S.S.A. 13 was ordered from Dunkirk to Crombeke, for work with the 87th Division, then holding the line between the British on the right and the Belgians on the left. At the same time, by request of the *D.E.S.* of the 36th Corps, a Convoy of 15 cars was formed to undertake the work of Dunkirk, previously carried out by S.S.A. 13. To distinguish it from a Section—essentially a mobile unit—it was termed a *Groupement*, (the Groupement "Friends' Unit"), as it was attached to the Base and only likely to move in the rare event of that moving. Under these circumstances, a workshop-lorry, kitchen, and the like, were superfluous, the Unit Headquarters providing directly what was required in these directions.

Without doubt the most important development in Convoy history was reached by the departure of S.S.A. 13 to Crombeke. Instead of cars being distributed according to the relative merits of individual drivers and the current demands of the Unit's stations, it marked the first serious effort to keep cars in their proper Convoys, regardless of whether this entailed overwork for one group and comparative idleness for another. Such a system, with clearly defined responsibilities and a fixed ratio of strength in cars and men, may on the face of it seem to be the only one possible. But up to this point in the Unit's history the advantages had really been found in the less formal methods employed.

For, in the first place, a great deal had hitherto depended on the elasticity of the Unit's resources; without that it could hardly have survived its first days and certainly could not have developed as it did. To maintain a constant level of employment for each group in all the fluctuations and uncertainty of its first winter was impossible. Most of its ventures were to meet temporary if pressing needs, and those that were more or less permanent and steady were about as few in number as those carried on under the explicit orders of military or civilian authorities. When the need for any particularly important section came to an end, feverish investigations were made in every direction that promised fresh possibilities. As likely as not, these investigations might result in the Unit being committed simultaneously and perhaps heavily to different authorities. Hence there came periods of inactivity, when slackness might mean

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disaffection and the possibility of a serious wastage of personnel, alternated with times of such pressure that every man and car had to work to their utmost limit. In either event, fluidity was of the greatest importance—in the one contingency that such work as there was might be spread out among as many as possible; in the other that all the Unit's available energies might be most economically distributed to meet the competing demands. As the Unit achieved a more settled position in the various official organisations, and so took on more permanent instead of emergency work, these phases became of less importance.

It was at this stage in Convoy history, when the Sections may properly be considered to have taken their final form, that the Unit was brought into contact with many authorities who during the following years were of great importance in its welfare. To arrange the necessary formalities, the *Direction des Services Automobiles* of the *Direction de l'Arrière* at *G.Q.G.* was visited, and the French General Headquarters were more fully informed of the nature and resources of the Unit than hitherto. For similar reasons it was desirable to get into touch with the British Red Cross Society's Sections, thus starting that pleasant association with Colonel Barry and his staff, who administered these Convoys, which was throughout the war of the greatest assistance to the Unit. For the first time, too, the Unit authorities came to know, and to appreciate, the able work of the *Office des Sections Sanitaires Etrangères* (or, as it was later called, the *Office des Sections Alliées*) in linking up the various voluntary Convoys on the Western front with the French administration. From this point, where the Convoys became distinct formations, their development may best be followed separately.

Section Sanitaire Anglaise 13.

Diary.

1915.

Feb.	14:	Poperinghe.	Dec.	16:	Crombeke, Woesten.
June	15:	Dunkirk.			

1916.

March	1:	Rexpoede.	June	7:	Malo, Beveren.
April	1:	Crombeke.	July	1:	Coxyde.
May	1:	Rexpoede.	Aug.	1:	Malo.
May	15:	Crombeke.	Aug.	31:	Amiens.
June	5:	West Cappel.	Sept.	1:	Compiègne.

1917.

Jan.	26:	Pont St. Maxence.	May	2:	Ancemont.
Jan.	28:	Châlons-sur-Marne.	June	18:	Joinville.
Feb.	5:	Ste. Menehould.	June	27:	Vieil Dampierre.
April	3:	Villers Marmery.	July	8:	Maffrécourt.
April	17:	Attack at Moronvillers.	Dec.	5:	Epense.
April	26:	Vavincourt.	Dec.	21:	Gizaucourt.

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1918.

Jan.	6:	Braux St. Remy.	Aug.	3:	Bligny.
Feb.	2:	Maffrécourt.	Oct.	1:	Crossing of Vesle.
July	14:	"Kaiser Battle."	Oct.	20:	"Hunding Stellung."
July	26:	Bournonville.	Nov.	3:	Ay.
July	28:	Ay.			

1919.

Jan.	21:	Malo.	Jan.	24:	Boulogne.

TOTAL PATIENTS CARRIED: 74,501.
TOTAL KILOMETRES RUN: 599,410.

Some account has already been given of the early work and movements of S.S.A. 13, prior to its full reorganisation and attachment to the French 87th Territorial Division at Crombeke in December, 1915. And yet, in one important respect, the reorganisation was still only on paper, for a glimpse of the Convoy's cars lined up in front of the Church at Crombeke would have shown a surprising diversity of types. It was not until well on in March that the full complement of the new "Vulcan" ambulances reached the Section, arriving a few at a time and at not too frequent intervals. So a good deal of the Convoy's time during the winter months was spent in equipping the new arrivals, and generally arranging the re-formed Section to meet with any eventualities. Meanwhile their work had to be carried out mostly with the old cars, and both drivers and mechanics had sometimes a strenuous time in keeping their charges *en état de marche*. But work on the road and on repairs was plentiful enough to keep members of the Section from growing too weary of their rather dull surroundings at Crombeke. Duties consisted for the most part of evacuations of sick and wounded from the *ambulances* in the village and from outlying billets in the neighbourhood, down to the *Hô. E.* 16 at Poperinghe, to Mrs. Borden Turner's hospital at Beveren, or sometimes to the bigger hospitals at Dunkirk and Zuydcoote.

The work of the main body at Crombeke then was none too exciting for the taste of most, but an out-station of eight cars was posted nearer the front just outside Woesten, at a *triage* lying close to the Ypres-Furnes road. From here there were regular runs, almost invariably under cover of night, to the aid-posts close behind the lines. This was for many of the drivers their first experience of really difficult night driving over front area roads, which even in full daylight required careful negotiation. The cases from the *postes* were brought down to the *ambulances* at Crombeke and Westvleteren, or sometimes direct to Beveren. The Convoy's memories of Woesten will always include a very pleasant one of Colonel Noble, who though not directly connected with the Unit, was during that period closely associated with the out-station there. From his motor soup-kitchen, a converted London omnibus, the Colonel used to dispense hot drinks and other comforts to the wounded *poilus* as they came into the *triage*.

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On this sector the Section remained working steadily, if not heavily, until midsummer. During these months they had three periods of *repos*, two spent at the village of Rexpoede, the other with some cars at Malo and others at Beveren. Early in June there were changes on the Woesten sector, where Belgian troops replaced most of the French battalions, and after being for a short time attached to the 37th Division, the Convoy moved on July 1st, 1916, to the Nieuport sector.

The Unit had already had a close connection with this strip of front, unique as being the extreme north end of the long Western front. S.S.A.14 had been working here for most of the previous twelve months, and it is perhaps interesting to notice in passing that S.S.A. 19, not yet formed, was later to continue the service of the French Divisions there till the spring of 1918. S.S.A. 13 was able to enter into tenancy of a very habitable wooden hut at their station at Coxyde, built by the Unit members who had preceded them. It stood under the shelter of a steep sandhill beside the La Panne–Coxyde road, just outside the village itself. Here the main body of the cars was stationed, serving three principal outposts: two front *postes* at Nieuport-Ville and Nieuport-Bains respectively, and the hospital at Adinkerke. Reserve cars, of course, were on duty at Coxyde day and night to meet calls for the front *postes* for additional help, or to replace the cars which came down from there on their way with patients for La Panne, Adinkerke, or the larger hospitals in the Dunkirk district at Rosendael and Zuydcoote. Driving on the advanced roads in the Nieuport–Coxyde area had its difficulties, but duty at the "*Bains*" was popular. It meant generally a stay of twenty-four hours in the remains of what had once been an elegant seaside villa; and the frequent shelling of the neighbouring dunes had in those days an interest of its own to those for whom this was still a novel experience.

The Convoy came down to Malo *en repos* on August 1st, and set to work on a variety of minor alterations on the cars, painting and cleaning. Towards the end of the month, after rumour as usual had been very busy, instructions were received that S.S.A. 13 was to move to a southern sector, making Amiens its first stage on the journey. The first phase of the Section's career had closed, and in leaving Flanders they opened on a more varied and often a more exciting one.

On the morning of August 31st, the imposing procession left Dunkirk, by now a regular fleet of standard types, a very different spectacle from the medley of cars which had left for Crombeke nine months before. They reached Amiens that night, and set off again early next morning under sealed orders, a condition which invariably gave rise to the wildest speculations as to the future. For the Convoy as a whole, the journey ended at Pont St. Maxence, on the Oise, some 23 kilometres to the south-west of Compiègne. Here orders were received to break up the complete Section into groups for work at evacuation hospitals widely scattered about the country round Compiègne. There was a hasty unloading of material on the roadside, and the men and cars divided up into the requisite number of small sections. Nine cars were divided according to

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instructions among the four centres of work at Clermont, Mouy, Villers Cotterets, and Chaumont-en-Vexin. The remainder of the cars was stationed at Royallieu, four kilometres from Compiègne, and placed at the disposition of the *Médecin-Chef* of the Palais Hospital in the latter town. Throughout the whole district the cars did a good deal of running, including much work on the evacuation of ambulance trains. On several occasions at Royallieu the whole section there was called out, at short notice, to evacuate a big trainload, even the lorry being pressed into service for carrying sitting cases. The only interesting change in the nature of the Royallieu section's work came on December 24th, when orders were received to send two cars to Choisy-au-Bac, to be attached to the Cavalry Corps which was at that time holding the line on the left bank of the Oise, through Tracy-le-Mont. Two cars were kept at Les Plainarts, an advanced *poste* in the forest.

Little as the work changed, the Section itself changed greatly during the five months in this area. The Convoy which left Malo in the autumn of 1916 included just enough men to drive all the cars, with four over. The first change in the personnel was occasioned by the departure of L. J. Cadbury, the *Chef-Adjoint*, who was unable any longer to remain with the Convoy without neglecting his more important administrative work at Malo. On September 23rd, C. E. Marshall took his place as *Chef-Adjoint*. Eleven new men joined the Convoy at Royallieu; the staff of the workshop was increased, and a new "Sunbeam" touring-car took the place of the "Beetle," as the late *Chef's* two-seater car was familiarly called.

In January, 1917, however, there came a change of scene; on the 26th the whole Convoy was re-assembled at Royallieu, and set off, by way of Champaubert and Châlons-sur-Marne, for Ste. Menehould, on the borders of the Argonne Forest. Their new headquarters was then about ten kilometres behind the lines, and the Convoy was quite well housed in a large stable in the town, close to the bank of the river Aisne. The work on this sector afforded the drivers a welcome variety. In addition to evacuation work from the neighbouring hospitals, including frequent runs to Châlons itself, there were four out-stations to be worked. Of these the *postes* at La Harazée and St. Thomas, reached by going through the ruined villages of Vienne-le-Château and Vienne-la-Ville, were the nearest to the front. The former lay in a long ravine, and drivers on duty there lived in comparative independence in a snug little hut on the hill-side. It was not spacious, and one of the party always had to sleep on the table; but there was at least one wicker arm-chair and a good grate which could be fed with the ample supply of firewood obtainable from the débris of Vienne-le-Château. Of St. Thomas, nothing was left standing except the skeleton of the church; a few cellars gaping into the waste above showed where houses had stood. Drivers here were stationed in a hut standing in a quarry near the church, and though the Germans had found the range of the spot with surprising accuracy, no greater damage than punctured bodywork was effected.

The Section's next move was to more strenuous fields. Early in April, 1917, they again received marching orders, this time to move westward towards

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Rheims and the scene of the rumoured offensive, which was by then in full preparation. The new station was at Villers Marmery, in the valley of the Vesle, reached after a slow journey along badly congested roads. On the 17th the storm broke, and the French opened their tremendous attack to recover the heights east and west of Rheims. The ambulances were posted first at Thuisy, where they waited at the ruined château till wanted nearer the lines. Both here and at the neighbouring village of Wez they came in for heavy shelling and much dangerous running. As the battle developed, all cars were called on to go up the long straight road out of Thuisy to the Bois de Cuisines and the Pyramid, open positions separated from the enemy's hillside trenches by not more than a kilometre of flat bare country. On this road the cars found themselves mixed up with a convoy of French Tanks, and it was significant that some days later the German *communiqués* complained that the French were painting the Red Cross sign on top of their Tanks! Altogether the road from Thuisy will not soon be forgotten by those who knew it during these days and nights. A gun team which was hit in the middle of the road blocked it almost completely until a gang of 13's men went out with tow-ropes and dragged the eight dead horses and the débris of the limbers into the ditch. On the first night at the Bois de Cuisines one car was hit by two shells, the second setting it on fire, and the next day a driver and the despatch-rider were wounded and had to be evacuated. The road became hourly more and more difficult for drivers to negotiate, and at one time a volunteer party of the Convoy's storekeeper and orderlies had to set to work to repair the roadway at its most exposed point in broad daylight. But considering the strain and excitement of the time, and the utter blackness of the nights, driving accidents were remarkably few, and altogether the Section was favoured by better luck than it might have hoped for in these surroundings.

But we may, perhaps, interrupt the recital of the bare facts with an account on more impressionist lines written by one of the Section's drivers :—

An Impression of Champagne, April, 1917.

It was on April 1st that the news came: the Section was to help its Division in an attack. Could the General, er . . . ? No, it was unheard of; we may have our little jokes among ourselves, but with the staff such things are not done.

Nevertheless doubt intervened. *Dans le métier militaire on ne sait jamais* is one of our Allies' sayings. To be held up at a cross-roads, and to be told that the other road has been blocked by troops for a day and a night already, is encouraging, though it may point to delay. Other things, however, were not so encouraging, but at the end of a week all doubt had faded. Attack was in the air.

Imagine simply a broad valley with hills on either side, and there is the scene. On one hill the French creep about behind screens and peep furtively at Fritz, and on the other hill Fritz also creeps and peeps, but far more furtively, for the trenches are nearer his hill than ours. Every road and track that may be used is screened; if one evades the military police and follows the forbidden path—as is believed to have occurred during the attack—there is unpleasantness in Nogent on the subject. For traffic is regulated. This road, for instance, may only be used by vehicles, drawn by white horses, proceeding in the daytime from A to B. That road, on the other hand, is reserved for ammunition lorries weighing over three tons when loaded, proceeding empty from B to C, provided that the drivers are married men. Should you wish to move from A to C you

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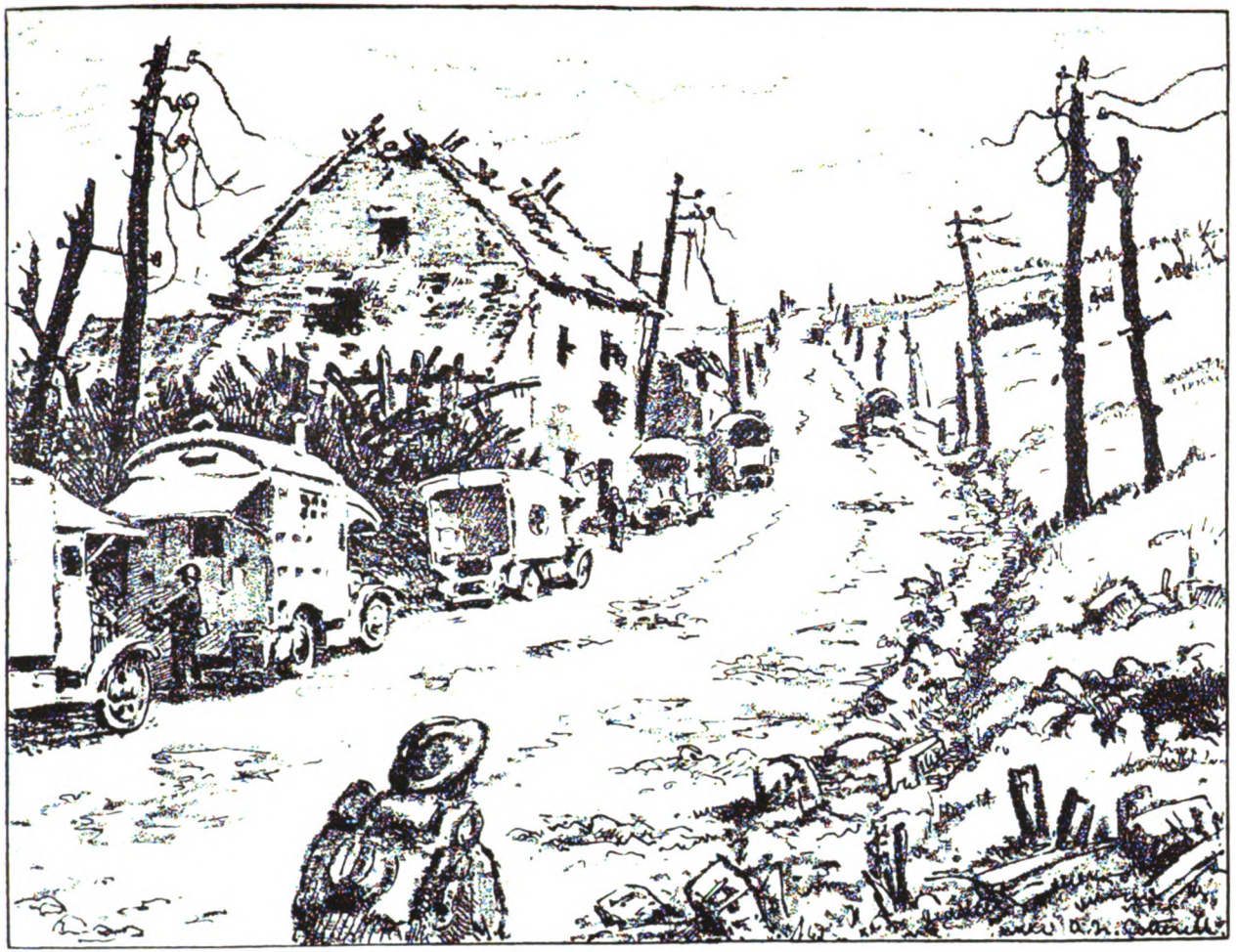

Plate XVIII

POSTE DE SECOURS, BLIGNY.

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are bound to get sent round by D unless you are lucky enough to throw a six first shot, in which case the penalty is half-an-hour's delay. Still we were always glad to think that the *Q.G.* has time for a little recuperative recreation.

Champagne, as we knew it there, was (if I may use the expression) bottled in grades, from the still Champagne you found on the wooded summit of the Mont de Reims, down to the distinctly fizzy brand of the Chaussée Romaine. The intervening space was to be classified thus:—The rest-and-be-thankful zone, comprising our own village and its neighbours on either side; the canal or nonchalant zone full of war-like noise, more deafening than dangerous; the Thuizy or hunt-the-cellar zone, and lastly the Pyramid or horrid zone, bristling with the engines of Mars and, as our contemporary Pepys would say, "most rarely poxed by the enemy's missiles and bomb-shells!" Over and above these, there stands one place in a category of its own. Mention Wez and the stoutest turns pale. We do not know why (nor can our pen describe so sinister a place), but we do ask what power of evil could have designed a village with these fine right-angled turns, with streets always littered with the débris of houses and limbers and sometimes of men; with the backs of tree-trunks and unexploded shells showing above the mud and the holes of exploded shells not showing below the mud. Even the best navigators have their ups and downs.

With their habitual *galanterie* the French Command selected two things British for the attack—a *Section Sanitaire*, and the weather. On the first choice we hope they had no cause for disappointment, but the blue books of meteorology hold no finer specimens of England's April than those they gathered on that day. It was on Sunday, April 16th, that the "strafe" which had been in progress for *n* days, began to reach a point of cumulative intensity, and those who were present at the time will doubtless remember the symptoms of extremé unrest displayed by the field-pieces especially. By Monday evening the very air was tense with expectation, though none the less damped by the atmospheric conditions which prevailed. Few nights could have been less propitious to the motoring world, and all through the long, black, drizzling hours, thousands of men filled the roads. On the same night the enemy were tactless enough to destroy our No. 6, but the flames, we were told by an American contemporary, made a bully show.

By five o'clock the next morning the procession began; a silent, pale procession of smashed humanity, two miles in length, labelled for repairs, limping slowly and dripping blood, friend and foe helping each other along. There was only one man who opened his mouth, and that was a bandaged Frenchman driving a handful of unwounded prisoners. He was pleased. At noon the bulk of the wounded had been dealt with, and at the same time the enemy artillery, which had been deranged by the attack, re-opened the ball, offering every facility to those who wished to display their *sang-froid* and other qualities. The majority, we noticed, made their respective displays in the neighbouring trench, where bread and bully were tastefully spread out on a machine-gun emplacement. There was one exception. Our *Chef-Adjoint*, doubtless with the Great Advance in his mind's eye, was meantime looking for a practicable road across the front line.

There have been few more historic scenes since the flood than the meeting—nearly the encounter—which took place that day between two great species of man's creative genius—Tanks and "Vulcans." They wallowed round amongst each other and rubbed their mammoth noses and made friends; they became inseparable, indistinguishable. Turn up your German *communiqué* of appropriate date and you will find the allegation that French Tanks "went forward after displaying Red Cross signs." Some might say that French Red Cross cars went backwards after displaying Tank signs. To continue—from the 17th to the 20th, when the Section betook itself to pastures new, the attack reverberated. The country suffered from the disease we call colloquially in our island-tongue "Hate." Though all our casualties were recorded the first day of the attack, it was never

de rigolo
— *Dans les sacrés boyaux,*

as the soldier-poet so tersely puts it.

Let us sit for a time on the driving-seat with one of our motorists. It is day-time and he is going up empty. He sees with a thrill of satisfaction what appears to be a large black tree suddenly take root and spring up by the roadside a hundred yards in front. He may even hope to get by before another of this variety has time to grow. He enjoys undoing his neatly-coiled tow-rope to pull horses, which have ceased to function, off the road. He loves to feel the sweat run down his face as he fills up shell holes that menace the traffic. Still more does he like to watch the restfulness that comes over the drawn faces of the men he unloads each on his way to his own particular "Blighty." Some he left lying very still in a row.

But there are some things he does not like. Generally it is night, dark, very dark, exceedingly dark, when all the world conspires to make him uncomfortable. Far away on Nogent an officer picks up the telephone. "Mr. So-and-So," says he, "fire me a salvo at xyz 3." Xyz 3 is a cross-roads and not far away is our *conducteur*, prone on the bosom of Mother Earth, wondering many

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things to himself. "Where did that one go? It is an absolute certainty the next will get me; wonder if it will be in the neck. Why is it so dark? Eleven o'clock! Six more hours before the grey dawn, six more long mouldy hours; anyway I shall never see the light again, so it doesn't matter. Why won't somebody else come along? Even a mule would be companionship. This is an unpleasant war. Here are some limbers and there's a flare—Hell! they will certainly be seen. Why can't they leave the roads to decent people? What a row there is going on. How can you expect to hear the next one come in with this sort of thing going on? I want to go home. What's the time now? Five past eleven . . . ." Presently, perhaps, he gets loaded with *couchés*; after a hundred yards the road is hopelessly blocked. He cannot go forward; he cannot go back. The road is being shelled. . . .

After this attack the 16th Division, to which the Convoy had been attached, came out of the line, and the Section went for a welcome *repos* to Vavincourt, near Bar-le-Duc, on April 26th. But early in May another move was made, this time to Ancemont, a village on the Meuse, about eight kilometres from Verdun. This was a pleasant summer billet, the cars being parked in the orchard of the Curé's house, the men living in them under the trees. From here six out-stations were worked, but while the Convoy was there, the Sector was a quiet one, and work was not too heavy. Another *repos* followed, spent partly at Joinville, partly at Vieil Dampierre, which lasted till early in July.

On July 8th, the Section moved with its Division up the line again, and was installed at the village of Maffrécourt. It was their first sight of a place which was to become to members of the Section almost as familiar as their own homes, for here they remained at work, with only a few weeks' *repos* about Christmas time, for over a year. Maffrécourt lies in that bleak and sterile part of the Champagne which enjoys the fitting name of the *Champagne Pouilleuse*. From the "Tooth-brush" Hill, a steep bluff separating Valmy from the Maffrécourt plain, a wide expanse of the front could be seen, stretching from the hills in front of Suippes away east to the Maison de Champagne, Massiges, and the Argonne Forest. The Convoy's cars were garaged near the village, in a spacious and lofty barn, known familiarly as the Cathedral, and the men were well housed in the farm-buildings. From here, out-stations were served: at the front the *postes* at the "Promontoire" and "St. Thomas," a little behind the line at Vauban; and at the *Ambulance* 9/8 at the Château de Braux St. Cohière, about three kilometres behind Maffrécourt.

It would take a long time even to enumerate the incidents of the long stay at Maffrécourt. At the front there were many small actions by both French and Germans, and most of these *coups de main* meant some additional work for the ambulances. At the out-stations bombardments of varying intensity were frequent, but happily they seldom caused any casualties.

The atmosphere became more strained from March, 1918, when the great German offensives opened. Indeed from March right on till July, the 16th Division was kept always on the alert, and no one knew what might happen at any moment. The long period of suspense culminated in the "Kaiser Battle," which opened with a furious German attack at midnight on July 14th. This brought another short but very strenuous period of activity, and there were many exciting episodes during these two or three days. But it marked the turn of the tide in the history of the war, and barely a fortnight later the Section left Maffrécourt for good.

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After the short stays at Bournonville and Ay, there was an eventful and arduous period spent in the desolate belt of country lying to the south of the river Vesle. The first advanced station at this stage was Bligny, over which the fighting had just passed; the dead still lay where they had fallen along that barren ridge. The French advance had now begun in earnest and plans were changed at the shortest notice. A further move was made to Treslon, a place which members of the Section will not readily forget, for here they lost Colin Priestman, who was killed by a shell in the village. The next move was to Poilly, where again they came in for some unpleasant shelling, and where a plague of flies, which abounded in this wilderness, seriously weakened the physical condition of the Convoy. Poilly, in fact, became uninhabitable, and the Section headquarters returned to the Ferme St. Denis, near Nanteuil.

The French advance took another stride at the beginning of October, and on the 1st of the month the Convoy crossed the Vesle to work an out-station at Trigny. Four days later they were at Villers Franqueux, working at high pressure to serve the *postes* at Loivre, Orainville, Bourgogne, and Bermericourt. On the 13th came a further advance, this time to Avaux, which meant the crossing of the Suippe and the Aisne and other smaller streams, by bridges hastily thrown over to replace those destroyed by the retreating Germans. It was a slow and wearisome journey, made behind columns of marching troops. Here, too, there were not a few thrilling incidents, particularly during the French onslaughts on the "Hunding Line," in the fetching down of the wounded from Lor, Le Thour, and St. Germainmont; all this in a countryside where many a village was represented by little more than a board with the name daubed on it. From Avaux the Convoy moved down *en repos* with its Division on November 1st, going by way of Neufchâtel-sur-Aisne and Rheims, to Ay, whence it had set out just over three months before. Since leaving it the Convoy had gone through perhaps the most crowded weeks of its whole career, and we may be permitted to quote concerning them from a descriptive account as before:—

More Impressions: July to October, 1918.

. . . After a few days' idleness we swing across from Maffrécourt away to the other side of Rheims, and after a few more days' idleness begin to go forward. . . . Ha, the lust of the chase! Ah, the fierce joy of pursuing! Ho, the open warfare! Oh, the beginning of the end! —Now let there be no mistake. We would rather go backwards. When an army goes backwards, it moves in the track of the hastily uprooted civilians, of houses, of roads, of beds, of luscious orchards, of fat pigs and poultry, of silver spoons and china dishes. But when an army goes forward, it moves in the track of the army that has gone before, and when the sturdy watchers of the Rhine go before it is quite safe to say that everything else goes before we get there. The matter admits of no doubt. Going forward is splendid in the newspapers, but for us (apart from the said fierce joy) it is a dirty business.

Perhaps we do feel a thrill when we see the sky lit up by distant fires and hear one *poilu* tell his fellow in deep sonorous *argot* that the Boche is doing all sorts of indescribable things, preparatory to the slinging of the Hunnish hook. We do feel a thrill when we sweep in broad daylight along the road that we trembled to creep along the night before. For three years it has been "Thus far shalt thou go and no farther" for the motorist. But now we cross a No Man's Land every other day, and the entire Section comes to rest among the *petits postes* of yesterday and pitches its moving tent among the barbed wire and the hand-grenades, who feel they have been done out of a job. So far, so good. But there are other things. We dislike stumbling over the unburied and unrecognisable dead, we shudder at a blackened head and shoulders staring at us from the ditch as we go

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by; we prefer a surface of macadam to heaps of rotting horse-flesh; we have no love for the lingering taint of "*yperite*," nor for the mine at the cross-roads. It pains us, what time the "Hate" begins, to think that every cellar in the place has been blown up, with one exception, and that the one exception will probably do its best to follow suit as we go down the steps. These are some of the other things. But where were we, by the way?

We have just finished swinging across behind Rheims from east to west. We are anticipating a forward movement, we are on the threshold of the—what shall we say, hardly the promised land—let us simply call it the *zone dévastée* of the Tardenois, as the military critics like to call it. . . . Palls of smoke hang over what were once villages, noisome effluvia hang over what was once living flesh, clouds of dust hang over what was once a road, and so on. We could go on for a long time with the what-was-once theme, but we feel we have said enough to bring to mind the idea of change which is inseparable from modern warfare.

Take the Mill on the Floss, for instance, where only a few months ago the goodwife called her two hundred *poules* to their *soupe* in the evening, and the children picked buttercups in the rich valley meadows. What is there of the rich meadows but craters and wreckage? What is there of the Mill but a crumbling heap? What is there of the Floss? We confess we could see nothing of the Floss. Again, take the bridge over the Ardre. *En effet*, you can't, as someone else apparently has taken it already. At any rate it has disappeared. The idea of change again, you notice. . . . But before we leave the subject and the Tardenois, we have two little stories to tell. This is one:—

Once upon a time there was a little boy who lived happily with his father and mother in a cottage. When he grew up, one day he went away with a lot of other young men and never came back. If you want to find him you have only to walk along the road over the Chambrècy ridge, and you will see there three shapeless mounds by the roadside, each surmounted by a little wooden notice-board. The first reads—UN CHEVAL; the second—UN BRAVE, and the third again UN CHEVAL. We do not know who the little boy was. We do not even know whether he was an Italian or a Frenchman, or a Briton or a German.

This is the other:—

Once upon a time there was an old man and his wife, who stayed behind after everyone else had fled before the tide of invasion. The old man stayed behind because, being a miser, he had some excavating business to do under the kitchen floor; and the old woman, being a woman, stayed behind to keep him company. While they were there, the tide of invasion rolled over them. We do not know what followed. Next time you go to Poilly church-yard you may see, if you care to, the graves of the old man and the old woman and a German soldier side by side in a row. But what has the German soldier got to do with it? These are problem stories—for there are many riddles of the Great War that will never be solved.

* * * * * *

What else do we remember of Poilly? We remember the daily pyrotechnic displays, when the sky grew black with barrage, and bits of it, obedient to Newton's law, came down again; when good stores of gas were burnt in a way to shock any controller in Europe; when tiny little men came floating down upon us from the blue, hanging by silken threads from white umbrellas. We remember those warm-hearted busybodies, the flies, and some of us remember only too well their effects upon our health. We remember, too, those shrill whistles and those dashes across the farmyard—sometimes interrupted by an interval for prostration upon the manure-heap—to the dark cave, where great man-eating snails lurked in the recesses of the rock and slid out on us at night.

We remember the return of the native one quiet afternoon, and how he seemed too dazed by all that had happened to realise that the fat pig he killed before he went away was not still hanging in the chimney, and that the bar of soap on the top shelf of the cupboard was ours, not his. We remember being mistaken for dead Boches by the Engineers, who came in the half-light of the dawn to tidy up the little village across the valley, where we lay sleeping amid the filth and débris of the houses. We remember the house there, where the General slept, but not what he said when they woke him up to tell him some wounded had arrived; and the charmed spot behind it, where not a car was destroyed.

We remember going "over the top" and crawling down the other side, with strands of camouflage catching at us from above and yawning pitfalls for the never-so-wary waiting beneath to engulf us. And how we laughed (afterwards) at the Sapicourt-Courcelles joke, for it was a relief to be able to say of a cloud of smoke and rubbish and a great noise, that makes itself seen and heard sixty yards away, "That was in the next village." Lastly, at Treslon we do not forget a grave upon the hillside, that is for ever England.

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We will not give a long account of the monotony of our life at Avaux. There is no difference between night and day, save that one is damnably dark; there are no meal-times; no rest times. During every hour of the twenty-four the little "crumps" and the big "crumps" come sailing into Lor; every afternoon the Allied 'planes go over in hundreds, every evening the Boche 'planes come over in tens; there is the *Hunding Stellung*, forty miles long and twenty deep, which calls itself impregnable and shows up nasty every time it is interfered with; there are lice; there is German Road, and the farms, all equally unpleasant; there is our own billet, which would be quite pleasant had we the time to appreciate it.

In short, our impressions of those three weeks tilting against the windmills, are cloudy and of a nasty flavour. Let us sum up thus—The 16th Division broke the *Hunding Stellung*, and the *Hunding Stellung* broke the 16th Division.

That is the end of this history. It is not unpleasant nowadays to feel that the moon is more than a lamp to light the Gotha, and the sun something better than a visibility for gunners.

While the section lay at Ay, the end came. The Armistice was duly celebrated by soldiers and townsfolk alike, and in the weeks which followed the Convoy was moved about from one dreary ruined village to another, ending up at Fourmies, near the Belgian frontier. Then the welcome news was received that they were to proceed to Dunkirk for demobilisation. They arrived at Headquarters on January 21st, handed over their faithful "Vulcans" at the Boulogne garages of the British Red Cross Society on the 24th, and left for England on the next day.

Section Sanitaire Anglaise 14.

Diary.

1915.

March	15:	Convoy officially formed.	June	16:	Bourbourg, Zuydcoote, etc.
April	18:	Elverdinghe and Poperinghe; attached to 45th Division.	July	1:	Coxyde; attached to 38th Division.
April	22:	Second Battle of Ypres (Elverdinghe).	Dec.	7:	Reorganisation of Convoy under new scheme —"Mors" and "Argylls" only.
June	15:	Malo.			

1916.

Feb.	18:	Malo.	Oct.	16:	Montreuil-sur-Brêche.
March	21:	Coxyde.	Oct.	26:	Haudivillers.
April	20:	Attached to 29th Division.	Oct.	27:	Ourcel Maison.
			Nov.	4:	Roche Condé.
May	1:	Malo—Ecole Sq.	Nov.	8:	Vaux.
June	1:	Coxyde.	Dec.	4:	St. André Farivillers.
June	30:	Malo—Football Ground.	Dec.	5:	Mailly Raineval.
July	31:	"Argylls" only.	Dec.	14:	Ebeillaux.
Aug.	1:	Coxyde.	Dec.	15:	Crèvecoeur-le-Grand.
Oct.	9:	Bergues.	Dec.	24:	Grandvilliers.
Oct.	15:	Convoy goes south: Hesdin.			

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1917.

Jan.	10:	Pont St. Maxence.
Jan.	12:	Château Rimberlieu; attached to 120th Division.
Jan.	24:	Chevrières.
Jan.	25:	Blincourt.
Jan.	28:	Resson.
Feb.	2:	Fleurines.
Feb.	2–11:	Run to Malo and back, "Argylls" exchanged for "Buicks."
Feb.	3:	Amiens.
Feb.	4:	Malo.
Feb.	7:	Amiens.
Feb.	8:	Fleurines.
Feb.	10:	Montmirail.
Feb.	11:	Châlons-sur-Marne.
April	5:	Suippes; attached to 24th Division.
April	17:	French attack at Suippes (Champagne) opens.
April	28:	Somme-Suippes.
June	19:	Vanault-le-Châtel.
July	13:	Ferme-de-Piémont.
July	19:	Bussy-le-Château.
Oct.	8:	Romigny.
Oct.	10:	Passy-Grigny.
Nov.	20:	Bouleuse.
Dec.	26:	Châlons-sur-Vesle; attached to 157th Division.

1918.

May	21:	Limé.
May	27:	Cuiry-Housse; retreat to the Marne begins.
May	28:	Villeneuve-sur-Fère.
May	29:	Bezu and Nesles-la-Marne
May	30:	Les Corbières.
May	31:	La Trétoire.
June	1:	Bellot.
June	4:	St. Martin-du-Boschet.
June	5:	La Rue.
June	10:	Les Merchines.
June	14:	Rarécourt.
June	30:	Bois de la Cousance.
July	8:	La Noue; attached to 127th Division.
July	15:	Last German attack (in Champagne).
July	21:	Passavant.
July	27:	Méaux.
July	29:	Vivières.
July	30:	Dampleux.
Aug.	1:	Attack at Grand Rozoy.
Aug.	2:	Oulchy-le-Château.
Aug.	3:	Maast.
Aug.	9:	Violaine.
Aug.	11:	Dampleux.
Aug.	14:	Le Boy d'Essarts.
Aug.	20:	Jaulzy.
Aug.	20:	Vache Noire and Vaux.
Aug.	21:	Vic-sur-Aisne.
Aug.	21:	Attack at Tartiers.
Aug.	28:	L'Isle Adam.
Aug.	29:	Gascourt.
Sept.	5:	Château d'Hérivaux.
Sept.	17:	Soissons.
Oct.	13:	Capture of Laon.
Oct.	14:	Laon-Semilly.
Oct.	19–20	Laon-Vaux.
Oct.	30:	Septmonts.
Nov.	4:	Down to the Vosges.
Dec.	4:	Châlons-sur-Marne.
Dec.	5:	Démange-aux-Eaux.
Dec.	5:	Bischwiller.
Dec.	6:	Portieux.
Dec.	7:	Varmonzey.
Dec.	15:	Baccarat.
Dec.	17:	Cirey.
Dec.	18:	Harzwiller.
Dec.	19:	Hengwiller.
Dec.	21:	Littenheim.
Dec.	22:	Bernolsheim.
Dec.	24:	Schirrhofen.
Dec.	25:	Oberbetchsdorf.
Dec.	29:	Oberhofen.

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1919.

Jan.	21:	Sarrebourg: Convoy leaves Alsace.	Jan.	27:	Doullens.
			Jan.	28:	Malo.
Jan.	22:	Toul.	Jan.	30–31	Boulogne—demobilisation; return to England.
Jan.	23:	Vitry-le-François.			
Jan.	24:	Lagny.			

TOTAL PATIENTS CARRIED: 50,960.
TOTAL KILOMETRES RUN: 648,138.

The itinerary printed above affords a sketch-plan of the eventful history of S.S.A. 14. Even from this laconic list of place-names, the reader, with the aid of a map and his memories of the course of the war on the Western front, may be able to judge that this Convoy's experiences were certainly no less varied, and at times no less exciting, than those of S.S.A. 13 or S.S.A. 19. To give a descriptive account of all the scenes in which S.S.A. 14 played its part would be impossible in the space available between these covers; it must suffice to draw attention to a few of the Section's outstanding periods.

Of its arduous work from Elverdinghe during the terrible days of the Second Battle of Ypres, something has already been said in recounting the early story of the Convoys; and there is no need here to emphasise the dangers and the stress of those days and nights of continuous running. Several of their cars were hit, and one member was wounded: a casualty list which in the circumstances was lighter than might have been expected. This was followed by some weeks of routine work attached to hospitals at Bourbourg and Zuydcoote, a sharp contrast to what had gone before.

But on July 1st, 1915, the Convoy was at the front again, opening its long period of service on the Nieuport sector. With the exception of occasional *repos* spent at Malo, the Section remained stationed at Coxyde for over a year, evacuating from the *postes de secours* at Nieuport-Ville and Nieuport-Bains. On the whole it was fairly regular work, but in September it became rather heavier, the German guns retaliating on the forward lines of communication for the bombardment of their positions by British monitors. On the 25th of that month one of the drivers, F. G. Taylor, was killed by one of five shells which burst near his car while he was loading a stretcher case; his patient and a bearer also were killed. With the winter came the usual difficulties of driving in bad weather. In that part of the front, the roads were often badly blocked by the drifting sand from the dunes, and on one part of the road there were memorable trials to the long-suffering drivers caused by a light railway which ran alongside the *pavé*. During November the Section suffered another loss, Walter Messer being killed by an aeroplane's bomb while starting up his car at Adinkerke station. Right through the next spring and summer (1916) the Convoy worked the same *postes*, though with increased numbers during the winter it was found possible to organise a better system of serving their needs. August and September brought some distinctly "unhealthy" spells on the

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sector, yet when orders came early in October to proceed to a new part of the front, the Section left their familiar ground not without some regrets. But they left an enduring and very useful memorial of their service at Coxyde in the wooden hut dwelling-place which they erected by gradual stages during these months.

From October 9th, 1916, to February 12th, 1917, with the exception of three weeks at Vaux, the Convoy never spent more than twelve days in one place. They had now exchanged Belgian sand for Somme mud, and their Christmas was spent at Grandvillers in miserable conditions. In January, at Croix Brise, the Convoy worked at its nearest part to the line; their *postes* here were only 200 metres behind the French trenches and 400 from the German. A landmark during this trying period was their long journey over frozen and snow-bound roads back to Malo for new cars; the Convoy then went to the Châlons sector, and thence to Suippes. Here things were fairly quiet till April 17th, when, like S.S.A. 13, they shared in the great French offensive in Champagne, and were kept constantly running in areas under heavy shell-fire. The number of wounded carried in the first day alone of this attack was 667. But for the most part the rest of 1917 passed without very much that was outstanding from the general routine of the stationary warfare during these months. While the Section lay at Bouleuse, west of Rheims, they regretfully bade farewell to their *Chef-Adjoint*, Richard Barrow, whose place was taken by Arthur Pearson.

After Christmas the Section was moved to Châlons-sur-Vesle, attached to the 157th Division, which held a sector slightly to the north of Rheims. The out-stations were at Villers Franqueux and St. Thierry, evacuations being made from the regimental aid-posts, and from these villages again down to Châlons-sur-Marne. Steadily engaged on this work, on a sector which if not particularly lively, was always interesting, the Convoy remained with its headquarters at Châlons-sur-Vesle until after the middle of May, 1918. One of the most notable phases of this long stay was the formal evacuation of Rheims during March, when all the remaining townspeople were ordered to leave their city. The roads were crowded with refugees, always a pitiable spectacle, but in this case with a peculiar sadness about it, because for three and a half years they had already endured frequent bombardments in their determination to stick to their homes. But later events showed the wisdom of the order for their evacuation, for in the second week of April came the great fires which destroyed large parts of the already sorely stricken city. Throughout April the Division's sector became much more active. Some members of the Section suffered from an enemy gas-attack, and shelling generally became more severe.

But this was only the prelude to the most strenuous period of the Convoy's history, which began shortly after their move to Limé, a village lying near the Vesle a few kilometres south-east of Braine. While they were here the German attacks opened, and the second great retreat to the Marne began. During the retreat the Convoy lost two more members in Norman Gripper and Hugo Jackson, who were killed at Braine while on their way to evacuate patients.

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Plate XIX DUG-OUT KITCHEN, SOMME SUIPPES. Facing p. 112

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It was a sad beginning to a week of intense strain and hurrying events, of which the reader may, perhaps, gain some idea from the account of a driver in the Convoy itself. He writes :—

It was on the evening of Sunday, May 26th, just as we were coming in for supper, that orders came to be in readiness to move in an hour and a half. No details were given, but it was pretty evident that "something big" was in the wind. Followed two of the most hectic hours the Convoy ever spent : there were all the stewards' and motor stores to be loaded up, as well as personal kit; but much more serious than that, there were a number of cars in a dismantled state, and gear-boxes and other such integral parts of the cars had to be put up again in record time. Before 8 o'clock however, the cars were all on the road, and lined up down the little village street. The *G.B.D.* had received the *alerte*, but knew no more than we did what was happening. Our cooks produced a hot drink from somewhere : still we waited in the darkness, and still no further orders came : till at length men dropped off to sleep where they could, some in their 'buses, others in a hut which had been used as a theatre. That night our uncertainty as to what was happening was removed : a terrific bombardment began up the line just in front, and any doubt as to who was the aggressor was removed by the arrival of a steady stream of big shells in Braine, a mile or so away. Before the night was out, some of our cars were already evacuating wounded from the shelled town. Meanwhile, gas-shells began to come over ; it soon began to get at our throats and we had to put masks on ; in the theatre the silence was broken only by the rhythmical clicking of the mask-valves as men breathed in and out.

Daylight found us still at Limé. The Division had been pushed up to the front (then some 20 kilometres away) during the night ; but beyond the evacuation from Braine, no wounded had been fetched. About 7 o'clock, however, a number of cars were sent up to fetch the *grippe* cases from the villages to which we had taken them a few days previously. This necessitated passing through Braine, which was still being subjected to fairly heavy shell-fire. Already the place showed unmistakable signs of the night's bombardment : telegraph posts and wires across the road, branches of trees, débris from the roofs of houses encumbered the streets. The contrast between the state of the place and the scene it had presented a couple of evenings before was very striking ; then the streets had been thronged with French soldiers, all the shops and cafés were doing a roaring trade ; now the whole place was absolutely deserted—not a soul to be seen. The inhabitants were all in the cellars—the bombardment having come on too suddenly for them to escape. At Brenelle, on the edge of the high plateau land beyond the Vesle, we heard the first news of a German push from a French straggler ; he reported that the Boches were pouring over ; that they were carrying all before them, after a terrific bombardment of H.E. and gas ; and that Ostel had fallen. The villagers were dismayed ; particularly when they heard that refugees were already taking to the roads.

These evacuations kept most of the cars busy during the early part of the morning. It was whilst passing through Braine, with two or three other cars, that N. E. Gripper's car was hit ; Gripper was killed instantaneously, and Hugo Jackson, who was with him at the time, was so badly wounded that he died shortly after reaching hospital.

Meanwhile, the wounded began to pour down, and the *G.B.D.* rushed up to the Ferme de Pinson, between Longueval and Vauxcere, where an attempt was made to set up an aid-post. A number of our cars were sent there ; others went on to Longueval (just this side of the Aisne) to pick up some wounded who were supposed to have been left there. The Germans by this time were advancing very rapidly. The roads were crowded with hundreds of refugees from the villages, who were trying to get a few of their household goods away in bullock-drawn waggons, or anything they could get hold of, down to hand-carts and wheel-barrows ; live-stock was mixed with up-going artillery columns, and the confusion was awful. To make matters worse, the Germans seemed to have everything their own way in the air, and their 'planes were flying low down over the roads, at a couple of hundred feet overhead, machine-gunning the French at will, with never a shot fired to keep them off except from infantrymen by the roadside. It was a weird sensation to hear the deafening " tuc-tac-tic " just overhead ; to look up and see the black crosses on the wings of the 'plane, while the German observer swivelled round his down-pointing machine-gun at the men cowering in the ditches on each side of the road, trying in vain to find shelter.

Almost immediately the *G.B.D.* moved back to the village of Paurs. The Ferme de Pinson was reported to be burnt out about an hour afterwards, while from other reports it appeared that the last of our cars to leave Longueval were surrounded on three sides before they left.

From Paurs cars were sent out to Dhuizel and to Ferme de la Montagne. None who were there are likely to forget that plateau on May 27th. Besides the constant menace of the 'planes, the roads were obstructed with dead horses, and continually under H.E. and shrapnel fire.

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Batteries were firing from open positions, sometimes at only a few hundred yards range. When four of our cars arrived at the Ferme de la Montagne, shells were whistling over at the rate of 3 or 4 a minute; it is true that most of them went over by a few yards, but several fell in the farmyard itself, and one nearly blocked the exit with débris. From this farm, one car was sent on to an advanced *poste*, a deserted dug-out by the roadside—to fetch three *blessés* who had been abandoned there earlier in the day. From this point, the actual fighting down in the valley a few hundred yards below could distinctly be seen, though it was no place to stop and admire the view. The dug-out was found to be entirely empty, but the car picked up a load of wounded from the roadside on the return journey.

The wounded were evacuated to Mont Notre Dame. There a long queue of waiting ambulances stretched right out into the road—French and British army ambulances, our own cars, and a number of lorries full of sitting cases. The nurses, doctors and all the hospital personnel, British and French, were working at full pressure, but still they could not cope with the continual stream of incoming wounded. Later in the day, the place fell into German hands, and hundreds of wounded must perforce have been abandoned to them. Late in the afternoon the Convoy's base was shifted back to Cuiry-Housse; still there were the *grippe* patients to evacuate—these were taken to Lesges, and this was the last we saw of them. That evening most of the cars turned up at Cuiry-Housse; the organisation of the medical service had for the time completely collapsed, and though our cars were still bringing down a few wounded, no attempt was made to arrange a full service.

We spent the evening in a state of considerable tension, waiting for the order to move. By the noise of the machine-guns it was clear that the enemy were not far off. Limé had been shelled early in the evening, and was said already to have been abandoned. It was not till after midnight, however, that we pulled up out of the little village in the hollow and up on to the crowded main road; turning in almost immediately to spend a cold night under a big open barn.

At 5 o'clock the next morning (May 28th) we were on the move again. Our departure was expedited by the noise of the machine-guns, which seemed to get nearer and ever nearer. We went first to Arcy-Ste. Restitue; hereabouts a relieving Division of infantry was coming up, and already deploying across the fields in open formation. At Cramailles we stopped and had a snatch of breakfast, while endless streams of lorries driven by Annamites passed us, rushing fresh troops up into the line. Then on to Villeneuve-sur-Fère, where we parked in a field just outside the village. Meanwhile, three cars which had spent a tiring night in the dense crowd of traffic in Fère-en-Tardenois, had rejoined the main body of the Section.

In the afternoon of the 28th, several cars were sent back to Arcy-Ste. Restitue, where a few wounded were still coming in; though another Division had now an aid-post there, most of the cases passed through their hands. The wounded were brought down from the line (in so far as there was any definite line) by stretcher-bearers, German prisoners being used on this job.

Late in the afternoon the first big shell landed in the square; after the first crash and the singing of bits of steel all round, everyone in the square scuttled for shelter like rabbits in a warren, and the next minute the square was empty. The bombardment continued, and presently our cars received orders to move out. At first we moved only to a roadside by a wood just beyond Arcy. Here we spent a miserable cold night, hanging on the skirts of Divisional H.Q., which consisted of the General's Limousine, a couple of hundred yards down the road. All night we shivered in a ditch, columns of artillery passing up and down within a few feet; while the noise of the shells bursting in and around Arcy alternated with the firing of a 6-inch battery which was letting loose from the other side of the wood. German 'planes were overhead, and after each big flash from the battery, we wondered whether the position would be discovered, and if so how long the German gunners would take to train their guns on the wood.

Early next morning we moved out of the wood, and down by Beugneux, near which we passed a French aerodrome that had been bombed out of existence, and Oulchy-le-Château, to the little village of Armentières, still keeping with the *Etat Major*.

From here a car was sent into Fère-en-Tardenois; the Fère-Dormans road was hardly passable owing to the stream of down-going traffic; while in the fields on either side were parallel columns of retiring troops. In the town all was confusion; the Germans were supposed to be within three kilometres, and advancing rapidly; everyone was clearing out as fast as the state of the roads permitted; the civilians were in a state of panic, and it was indeed difficult not to believe that this was a complete rout. Meanwhile the French were blowing up munition dumps; huge bursts of flame a hundred feet high rose into the air, followed by a most terrifying report which shook the whole place like an earthquake, bringing slates, tiles and chimneys rattling down into the roads.

The main body of the Convoy had spent a comparatively peaceful night at Villeneuve-sur-Fère, but on the morning of the 29th moved back once more; in spite of the congested state of the roads, most of the cars which had become separated from the Convoy (a number had been sent to Coincy on evacuation) including those with the *Etat Major* at Armentières, managed to rejoin

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the Convoy. We were now well away on the Château Thierry road, and thought that we were definitely being sent *en arrière*, the Division having suffered so severely as no longer to count as a line unit. We turned off the main road about 15 kilometres before Château Thierry, into a little village called Bezu St. Germain. Here we had lunch, and were able to devote most of the day to filling up, greasing, mending punctures and any running repairs that needed doing.

After the morning's run down from the Fère district, we felt that we had left the fighting well behind us. But before the afternoon, the news that Villeneuve (where we had been that morning) was in flames was followed by reports that the Germans were following up rapidly with cavalry patrols and armoured cars. By evening, they were once more in the neighbourhood. Looting again commenced on every hand—a sure sign that the place was doomed; all regular *ravitaillement* had, of course, gone by the board. Foodstuffs were at a premium, and wild chases were afoot in the poultry-yards.

From Bezu the main body of the Section moved back, still amid harassing circumstances of all kinds, by way of Les Corbières and La Trétoire, to Bellot, where they arrived on June 1st. But meanwhile several cars had been obliged to remain with the *G.B.D.* and *Etat Major* at Bezu. They, too, had exciting adventures while making their way south of the Marne, getting hopelessly lost on the night of the 30th, but fortunately succeeded in rejoining the Section without casualties at Bellot.

One incident of these critical days deserves mention in passing. Several of the Convoy's cars were commandeered by the Divisional General, in spite of the protests of the medical staff, and used for other than Red Cross purposes. This action the French authorities sought to justify by the stress of circumstances, but the Unit was none the less obliged to enter a protest at the earliest opportunity. To this an assurance was given that on no account would such a breach of Red Cross regulations be allowed to occur again.

As in the case of the other Convoys, the remainder of the summer and the autumn were full of varied movement and all the difficulties of advancing with their Divisions over the old No Man's Lands into new and unfamiliar territory. The stress of the retreat was followed by a quiet interval in the Argonne Forest. In July the Convoy was attached to the 127th Division, and there followed some arduous times during August, especially at Maast and Violaine, where they found themselves again in the country they had known before the retreat—but now sadly changed by the passing of war across it. On August 17th, Arthur Pearson, who had been *Chef-Adjoint* for the past seven months, left the Convoy, his place being taken by H. E. Milton.

But a glance at the itinerary of the Section printed above, will suffice to show how busy they were during these last months of the war. Attack followed on attack, and cars were kept constantly running, the lengthening lines of communication meaning long and exhausting runs. When, on October 30th, they finally left the front for the last time, they were beyond Laon. The Armistice however found them three hundred kilometres away, enjoying a welcome *repos* in the Vosges.

But the rest of their story was chiefly, perhaps, of spectacular interest. In December they were moved into Alsace-Lorraine, and were billeted in many different parts of the regained provinces. They witnessed Marshal Pétain's triumphal entry into Strasbourg on November 25th, and were present at the

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fête there a fortnight later, when Poincaré, Foch, Haig, Clemenceau, and many other famous figures were in the city. But though life in this new country was full of interest, everyone was anxious for return at last to their own. And it was with relief that the last journey back to Malo was begun on January 21st, 1919. They arrived back on the Place du Kursaal at Malo on January 28th, on the same day as S.S.A. 19 also returned. The cars were handed over at Boulogne, and the members of " 14 " returned to England on the last day of the month.

Section Sanitaire Anglaise 19.

Diary.

1916.

Oct. 1: Malo: formation of Convoy completed.
Nov. 1: Coxyde; attached 45th Division.
Dec. 1: Malo.

1917.

Jan. 1: Coxyde.
Jan. 11: Coxyde; attached 29th Division.
May 31 to June 6: French and German gas attacks.
June 20: Sector taken over by British; Convoy to Pont d'Oye.
July 20: Vieille Eglise.
July 31: Houthulst Forest attack: Oostvleteren.
Aug. 12: Vieille Eglise.
Aug. 16: Oostvleteren.
Oct. 7: Houthulst attacks reopen.
Nov. 18: Coxyde.

1918.

Feb. 10: Sector taken over by Belgians; Convoy to Malo.
March 29: Aumâle.
April 2: Boves: Somme battle.
April 16: Namps-au-Val.
April 21: Ligny-en-Barrois.
May 10: Camp Fréty.
May 27: Epense; attached 120th Division.
May 29: Venteuil; Marne battle opens.
May 31: Boursault.
July 4: Les Limons.
July 7: Ay.
July 27: Mairy.
Aug. 3: Rarécourt.
Aug. 11: Glorieux, near Verdun.
Sept. 15: Grange-aux-Bois, Argonne.
Sept. 21: Epense.
Sept. 25: Gizaucourt.
Sept. 28: Somme Tourbe.
Sept. 30: Somme Bionne: Aisne advance.
Oct. 12: *Poste* at Vouziers.
Oct. 18: Mourmelon-le-Grand.
Oct. 31: Machault.
Nov. 5: Vouziers.
Nov. 8: Le Chesne.
Nov. 9: Vendresse.
Nov. 17: Suippes.
Dec. 14: Vitry-le-François.
Dec. 18: Ligny-en-Barrois.
Dec. 23: Malzéville, near Nancy.

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1919.

Jan.	20: Detached from 120th Division.	Jan.	27: Doullens.
Jan.	22: Meaux.	Jan.	28: Malo.
Jan.	23: Paris.	Jan.	29–31: Demobilisation of Convoy.

TOTAL PATIENTS CARRIED: 31,776.
TOTAL KILOMETRES RUN: 436,547.

It was a dismal November morning in 1916 when S.S.A. 19 moved up to Coxyde to take up their work with the 45th Division, on a sector which Unit Convoys had served almost continuously since early in 1915. But we have already seen what the work at Coxyde and Nieuport involved, and there is no need to describe it again; for S.S.A. 19 it was much the same routine during these winter months as it had been for the other Sections. They remained at Coxyde, save only for a month's *repos* during December, 1916, until June, 1917, when the coastal sector was taken over by the British Fourth Army, and the Section retired *au repos* again with the relieved Division to Pont d'Oye and Vieille Eglise. But the weeks here passed rather slowly, and no one was sorry to receive an urgent order on the afternoon of July 31st to move up to the front again. The French attacks on Houthulst Forest had commenced, and there were not enough ambulance cars to cope with the streams of wounded coming in.

Arriving at Oostvleteren at dusk in pouring rain, after a tedious journey over bad roads congested with slow-moving lines of traffic of all kinds, they parked the cars in a field close to the main Ypres–Furnes road and turned in, expecting to be called out at any minute. A tremendous artillery duel was in progress and it was impossible to sleep, but they were not called for till next morning, when they took over duty at two *postes de secours* of the 51st Division, one at Ferme Abeelenhof and the other at Ferme Segers, both on the road between Reninghe and Pypegaale. The running was continuous during the first week over roads especially marked by the enemy and heavily shelled. The stretch between Abeelenhof and Reninghe will long remain an unpleasant memory in the recollection of some, and many were the tales of hairbreadth escapes whilst rounding "Reninghe Corner."

At the end of a fortnight the lines had once more become stationary and work slackened off very considerably. For some unknown reason they went back to Vieille Eglise for three days, and were then recalled to Oostvleteren to replace a French Section which had most of its cars off the road. This time they found more comfortable billets in the church square, till a burst of heavy shelling in the neighbourhood forced them to take shelter in bell-tents outside the village. During this period wounded were evacuated to a large tent hospital at Linde, about ten kilometres north of Oostvleteren, with occasional longer runs to Rousbrugge.

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In September came two days' *repos* at the latter town, but the Division went into line opposite Boesinghe and the Section again returned to Oostvleteren. The roads over reconquered country east of the Yser canal being impracticable for cars, the wounded from the whole Division were brought across on hand-carts and collected at a *poste de secours*, Ferme Paratonnerres, about a mile north of Boesinghe. At this *poste* three cars were attached with a relay of cars at a *poste de triage* at Woesten. Though the work at first was not heavy, the roads were in very bad condition and played havoc with tyres and springs, and the garage staff was kept busy on repairs of all kinds.

During the first week in October preparations for a renewal of the offensive were taking place under the worst possible weather conditions, and owing to the large increase in traffic the roads in places became almost impassable. At dawn on the 9th the attack was launched, and in order to deal more easily with the influx of wounded all available cars were stationed at Woesten. Satisfactory progress was made by the infantry over most difficult water-logged ground, and a fresh advance was made almost every morning during the next fortnight. There was no definite line of trenches and the *poilus* had to spend the night in shell-holes half-filled with water; as a consequence there were many hundreds of cases of frozen feet and cars were kept busy night and day. Two or three ambulances broke down owing to the bad state of the roads and the heavy strain, and the cars that were in running order were only just able, by working day and night, to keep the *poste de secours* clear. However, by the beginning of November the lines had again become more or less stationary, and a few wounded were coming in. It was now found practicable to take cars across the canal at one point, and an aid-post was established in a German "pill-box" at the Carrefour Charpentier. This was a desolate and exposed spot in the middle of the crater-field, reached by a winding log-road, the journey over which must have caused agonies to the patients.

A few weeks later (November 18th, 1917) the Belgians took over the sector, and S.S.A. 19 returned to the familiar sandhills of Coxyde, this time joining the 29th Division, which was replacing the British. They relieved the British ambulances at the *postes*, one at Nieuport-Bains, two at the Monastery at Oostdunkerque-Bains, and two at Oostdunkerque-Ville. The brewery at Nieuport-Ville was no more; there was still an aid-post in the wine vaults, but owing to repeated heavy shelling in the vicinity it was decided not to have a car stationed permanently there. The cars at Oostdunkerque served this *poste* by telephone call, but it was very seldom that any wounded were brought in.

The sector was very quiet until the night of December 10th, when the Germans put over a terrific barrage of mustard shells at Nieuport-Ville, and all cars were called out. Heavy shelling continued throughout the day, special attention being paid to the roads, and several cars nearly came to grief whilst crossing Pelican Bridge; this bridge was shattered later in the day by a direct hit, making it necessary for the drivers to go past the Bois Carré, another very unhealthy spot. But by Christmas running had again become normal, and in

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February, 1918, the sector was occupied by a Belgian Division, the Section coming down to Malo to await further orders. Here Edward Brady, up till then the *Chef-Adjoint*, left them, his place being taken by Crofton Gane.

March, 1918, brought, as none can forget, dark days on the Western front. On March 28th, orders came through to be ready for a long trip southwards. The next few hours were spent by some in hurriedly reassembling cars which were under repair, whilst others did their best to get their worldly belongings into as small a space as possible. The move was not quite unexpected, as the air was full of rumours of heavy fighting and German advances in the region of the Somme; the 29th Division was expecting a move any day, but no one could say if " 19 " would be going with them.

By way of St. Omer, Hesdin, and Abbeville, they reached Aumâle on the evening of Good Friday. Billets were hard to find, as the town was packed with refugees, but in a dilapidated water-mill they stayed until the following Tuesday, when a move was made to Boves, about eight kilometres south-east of Amiens. This village consists of a straggling street on the south side of the valley of the Avre and backed by a high chalk cliff, on the top of which are the scanty remains of a castle from which a magnificent view could be obtained. The little place was a seething mass of French and British troops, so that it was some time before all got parked in the square. Billets were found in the house and workshop of a village carpenter, which was just as it had been left by the owner. The workshop with its benches made quite a good mess-room, and the tools came in handy for repairing the body-work of one or two cars. Work started at once, cars being sent up to Berteaucourt and Domart where *postes* were established during the night, and some twenty cases came through before morning.

Domart is a fair-sized village on the main road from Amiens to Roye, sixteen kilometres from the former, and approached from Boves up a long hill, the road passing at the summit through Gentelles Wood, then full of guns. Next came a fairly level stretch, notable for its dead horses (to be carefully looked for at night), and finally there was a steep drop into the village, which lies in the valley of the Luce. This hill had an objectionable habit of developing unexpected shell-holes, and whenever one was in a particular hurry to get out of the village it always seemed much steeper than usual. The *poste* was installed in the cellar of a farmhouse in the village street. The village, when the Convoy arrived, had few signs of war except a look of desolation and random soldiers wandering from door to door with armfuls of anything that took their fancy. A fortnight later all was very different; there was not a whole house in the place; several were spread out over the road, adding to the perils of night driving; both garages had been brought down; and the *poste* had several times been hit, a " dud " landing on the back stairs.

Berteaucourt also lies in the valley of the Luce, about three kilometres south of Domart, on the road to Montdidier, but it was not quite so overlooked, for to the south the hills give place to the low swampy ground which borders

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the River Avre. The aid-post was in the cellar of a cottage about 120 yards short of the bridge over the Luce. Near the top of the ridge on the further side stood a windmill at a distance of about 800 yards from the *poste*. This landmark changed hands several times, and the dead could plainly be seen lying on the slope. On the night of April 4th, the Germans are said to have crossed the bridge into the village; anyhow, the driver and *convoyeur* on duty were surprised to hear the machine-guns so near, but did not know at the time what was going on. During the greater part of the time the enemy held the crests, but finally he was driven over the ridge. Although the Germans were nearer Berteaucourt than Domart, the former was not shelled so continuously, but was subject to sudden and heavy barrages often lasting an hour or so.

The first hospital was at Guyencourt, eight kilometres south of Boves, through which all cars had to pass. Owing to German advances this hospital had to be given up almost at once, but not until the enemy was within some three or four kilometres. On April 4th the Convoy moved in pouring rain to Fouencamps, where the *Service de Santé* had already settled itself. They were immediately met by streams of wounded, who had to be evacuated at once, as the result of a heavy German attack then in progress. Whilst the Convoy was waiting in the street two 'planes came over very low, machine-gunning all round, but fortunately no one was hit. Towards evening things began to look serious, so that the "heavies" and the loaded ambulances were sent off to spend a miserable night by the roadside between Boves and Cagny; later on the remainder returned to Boves. The same afternoon Guyencourt hospital proved incapable of dealing with the rush, so that several cars had to go on to Jumel near Ailly over a nearly impassable road, which in places was nothing more than a cart track. To make matters worse the road was crowded with retreating guns, limbers and lorries, and often blocked whilst batteries turned off the road to fire a few more rounds. During the night a new hospital was opened at Sains, eight kilometres south-west of Boves.

Until things had become settled many irregular trips were made. Several cars went to Dommartin, one of which evacuated aged civilians to the other side of Amiens; two cars spent most of the night trying to reach Hailles beyond Thézy along a steep and narrow lane, so muddy and cut up that they finally stuck short of the village and had to tow each other out, at the same time being cautioned not to make too much noise; and a few days later a car was sent up from Domart to Hangard on a very black night to load up whilst the Germans were in the other end of the village.

On April 12th a *Poste de Triage* was opened at Boves, and all evacuations from this date onwards were to a large hospital at Dury, in the outskirts of Amiens. For the whole period the drivers were kept very busy, often running continuously night and day, snatching an hour or two of sleep where and whenever possible. The weather was exceptionally bad, nights very dark and traffic along the narrow roads from Boves to the hospitals always most congested. Lights of course were out of the question, except on the hospital side of Boves, where, unless German 'planes were about, oil lamps were allowed. The heaviest

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Plate XX

POSTE DE SECOURS, ABEELENHOF.

Facing p. 120

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spells of work were on the night of the 8th, when nineteen cars were called out between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m. to cope with the results of an enemy attack at Hangard, and again on the 12th, 13th, and 14th, when there was a very heavy rush of gas cases, particularly from Domart. It was a tragic sight to see crowds of nearly blinded men with streaming eyes, groping about the yard and buildings round the *poste* (the cellar being already full) while shells were falling all about the village and often within a few yards of the cellar door. It was then that this *poste* possessed a veritable Chamber of Horrors—a room on the ground floor in which the dead lay in disorderly heaps. To help with the rush two light lorries and the tourer were used for evacuating sitting cases. Even then it was often only possible to carry those who could not see at all, the rest having to walk to Boves. These one met on the way up, crying out to be taken on board; and it was hard to have to pass them.

Shelling became very frequent, particularly at Domart and along the road between Gentelles Wood and the village. This was probably largely due to the fact that the road passed through the reserve line of trenches which during the last few days were manned by Australian troops. It was on this stretch that a shell dropped behind one of the ambulances, killing a patient and wounding two others, but the driver escaped with only a slight scratch, and was able to carry on to Boves though three tyres were flat.

On April 15th, however, after a fortnight of strenuous fighting and heavy losses, the Division came out of the line. During *repos* at Ligny-en-Barrois, the Section was detached from the 29th Division, and then spent some time at Camp Fréty, south of Verdun. On May 27th the Section was attached to the 120th Division at Epense, the same day that the Germans launched their attack on the Chemin des Dames. There was no mistaking the fact, in the seething, struggling mass of traffic on the roads round Epernay, that something out of the ordinary routine of war was afoot. At Port-à-Binson they crossed the Marne. The roads were temporarily impassable on account of the retreating forces, British as well as French—several British Divisions, who had arrived on the Marne front for a rest, being in the neighbourhood. The drivers picked up a considerable stock of petrol from the French *dépôt d'essence* at the corner, and filled all the available cars, in case of a further advance by the Germans. Receiving fresh orders they returned in the Epernay direction along the north bank of the Marne to Venteuil. Here the cars were parked in the playground of the village school, the drivers sleeping in them fully dressed; the others in a hut which had previously been used as *bains douches*. Until the evening it had been extraordinarily quiet, so far as guns were concerned, but with night the *avions* became troublesome, and a bomb fell close to the school, a piece piercing the roof of the hut and slightly wounding one member of the Convoy.

Orders were received during the night to move to the further side of the Marne, so at 8 a.m. they left Venteuil, which, although inhabited the night before, was now fast emptying. By way of Damery, and on by the main road

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through Port-à-Binson once again, they reached the hamlet of Mareuil-le-Port. Here the cars were parked in a field adjoining the Château. A barn on the opposite side of the road was used as a billet.

Almost immediately five cars went to fetch wounded from Pareuil, Verneuil and Violaine, where *postes* were established. These *postes*, however, had to be given up either in the afternoon or on the following day, owing to the continued German advance. The cars going to Pareuil and Verneuil went by way of the Verneuil bridge and had a very exciting trip. The ditches were lined with machine-guns and with infantry who tried to stop the cars going to the *poste* at Pareuil, as it was said that the Germans were already there. They went on, however, loaded hurriedly and returned, the village being taken shortly afterwards and the Verneuil bridge being blown up. The *poste* at Violaine was withdrawn to Cuisles, and shortly after to Châtillon. The last driver to leave Cuisles with wounded watched the retreating infantry coming down the hill-side, and the batteries of ·75's firing a few rounds, galloping to another position further back, then firing once more, and so on. But the great difficulty of these first few days was that no driver knew the country-side or villages, and several times it was only by good luck that the cars did not run into German territory.

During the second day the first few German shells arrived somewhat promiscuously in the valley, and in the evening several batteries of ·75's started to flash and bark on the hills opposite Mareuil-le-Port. Next morning (May 31st) a move was made by Leuvrigny to Boursault. Most of the cars were at once sent off on duty to Port-à-Binson, where a *triage* had now been set up, but after some days only four cars at a time were stationed at that place. At first the task of the Convoy had been to carry the wounded across the river only; thence another Section, S.S. 4, evacuated to Epernay. When, however, the advance was arrested, evacuations were made to the Château at Boursault, owing to the shelling and bombing of the hospital at Epernay. The Château, the village and the billets, however, were shelled in their turn, and all evacuations were then made to St. Martin d'Ablois. In the meantime the *postes*, after several changes, were established at Vandières and Châtillon. The bridge at Port-à-Binson and the roads leading to the *postes* were heavily shelled with high-explosive and gas shells during the first few days, as also were the two villages themselves. Unfortunately, the bridge at Port-à-Binson was mined in the centre, the crossing thus having to be done at a slow walking pace, which was far from pleasant when shells were dropping in the river and on the banks at either side. About this time the last of the civilians from Vandières, Châtillon, and Port-à-Binson were evacuated by the Section, some to Epernay and some to St. Martin d'Ablois.

On July 4th, the Division was relieved, and next day the Convoy moved *en repos* to Les Limons, on the south side of the river. But on the evening of the 7th they left at short notice for the adjoining sector on the Montagne de Reims, where the 120th Division was to be in reserve behind the Italians

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who were then holding that part of the line. For a week the work of the Convoy, with its base at Ay, went forward smoothly enough, but close on midnight of the 14th, the expected storm broke. The Germans opened fire with every gun in preparation for their last attempt to break the Western front, and the French replied with the great reserve of guns which had been pouring into this sector for days past. The weather did not favour the Germans, for during the three days of their attack it was showery and unsettled. At 3 a.m. all available cars were sent up from Ay to Centaines, and cars at *postes* were doubled. As the Germans advanced the French became involved, and the running of all cars became extremely heavy, both French and Italian being carried. Added to the heavy traffic on the roads was the constant stream of refugees pouring back from their threatened homes, carrying all the goods they could. Pourcy, Nanteuil and the roads leading to them were now badly shelled and cars had to run the gauntlet on each trip. At the Bois de Courton, men passed the night in a trench with gas-masks on, as the place was deluged with gas-shells. Men came in blind and crying from its effects. Terrible was the scene in a room where hopeless cases were left to die. Late in the day a battery of '75's in retreat took up a position in the same field as the relay cars, and the latter were ordered back to another field above Hautvillers. The next day the Germans advanced through the Bois de Courton and the *poste* had to be withdrawn, being under continued machine-gun and rifle fire. As the last car left, Italian bombers, armed only with bombs and knives, advanced through the woods to meet the enemy. Hautvillers and all roads were heavily shelled and the American Section working alongside sustained several casualties. German machine-gunners had now reached the outskirts of Nanteuil and Pourcy, and two cars at the latter place narrowly escaped capture. Knowing that their line of retreat was cut at Nanteuil, and seeing the Germans advancing through the cornfields, they managed to escape, with sixteen men on board each car, by an almost impassable side-track to the east *via* Courtagnon and St. Imoges—the tyre of one car being punctured by a bullet.

But by now the Germans had reached the climax of their offensive, and by the 18th the initiative was passing into the hands of the French. British Divisions appeared on this front, and at the Ferme d'Ecueil the Convoy was able to give some assistance to a British medical formation sorely pressed by the flow of casualties. Running continued under trying conditions right on till the 26th, when the Convoy's *postes* were relieved, and the Section moved to Mairy-sur-Marne for a brief *repos*.

This marked the beginning of a comparatively tranquil period for S.S.A. 19. It was spent mainly at Glorieux, near Verdun, on the site of the terrible battles of two years before, but now behind a quiet sector. On September 15th a move was made to Grange-aux-Bois, on the edge of the Argonne Forest. Drivers were just beginning to get familiar with their aid-posts in the forest when fresh orders were received, and on September 21st they were back at Epense with the 120th Division, and ready to move forward.

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They left after only three days, the orders being to move under cover of night. They set off before dawn on the 25th for Gizaucourt, and thence four days later for Somme Tourbe. By then the French offensive had opened, and the roads were badly congested all day and all night. On the 30th the ambulances were working at the *postes*, travelling over some of the worst roads they had yet experienced. Next day the Section headquarters were pushed forward to Somme Bionne, the *poste de secours* being now at Moulin de Ripont. Most of the cars were sent straight to the latter place, the road running through Hurlus and Tahure, villages which, like Ripont, had been at the mercy of the opposing artilleries for the past three years. The inflow of wounded was considerable; and when at last the *poste* was reached, after six hours of dead-slow driving along roads only reopened for traffic during the past few hours, there was plenty of work to be done.

Evacuations throughout this spell of work were made upon Somme Bionne and Auve, so that even at this early stage *blessés* had to be carried about thirty kilometres to hospital. As the advance continued the *G.B.D.* moved up from Ripont to Gratreuil, and *postes* now gradually moved on to the neighbourhood of Ardeuil, thus adding another ten kilometres. At Gratreuil the advanced billet was established, moving shortly afterwards to a recently vacated German hospital at Vieux. There were many difficulties at this time of open warfare in keeping in touch with the rapidly advancing infantry and the constantly changing *postes*, which almost invariably were found to have taken up a new position after each trip to hospital. They moved successively to Spitzbergen—a hill around which desperate fighting took place—Marvaux, Monthois, Liry, St. Morel, and ultimately almost to Vouziers itself, entrance to which had been rendered impracticable by huge mine craters.

By now, the old devastated zone had been passed, and traces could be seen in most villages of quite recent civilian occupation; but many of these places, notably Monthois, had suffered cruelly from the combined artilleries during the advance. The final stage came with a move forward of the advanced billets to Sugny, where quarters were found in a shattered farm at the cross-roads on the way from the village to Ste. Marie. It was from here that several of the cars first entered the long-coveted town of Vouziers. The distance involved in bringing down wounded to the hospital—still stationary at Auve, was such as the Section fortunately had never known before. From *poste* to evacuation hospital now meant a run of over eighty kilometres, and with the roads as they were, this meant at least a six-hour trip. After one night at Sugny however, the welcome news came that the Division was to be relieved; but that one night was memorable on account of the sharp bombardment of the village by the German guns. On October 15th an American Section took over the *postes*, and the Convoy reassembled at Somme Bionne, after three of the hardest weeks in its existence. Thence they moved *en repos* to Mourmelon-le-Grand on the 18th.

When the Section left the front at this juncture, many had doubts as to whether their Division would again see any fighting. And it was with some

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surprise, therefore, that after ten days' *repos* at Mourmelon-le-Grand they heard that the infantry was going into the line within a few days. Several of the ambulances followed the regiments as they marched to their positions on the Aisne, north of Vouziers, and leaving Mourmelon-le-Grand on October 31st, the remainder of the Section moved to Machault, where Convoy headquarters were established. The preliminary barrage opened as the 1st of November dawned, and shortly afterwards all the ambulances still at Machault were required to clear the wounded who were being brought into Vrizy. Fortunately, the distance to the ambulance at Semide was not more than eighteen kilometres, and with a relay post in a field above Quilly it was possible to cope with the streams of wounded which came pouring down all day and did not cease until evening. Contrary to expectations there was little shelling of the villages and roads, and the evacuation of patients was not difficult. But with natural defences to aid them the Germans put up a strong resistance and inflicted heavy casualties on the Division when first it attacked. The infantry soon broke through, however, and the aid-posts were advanced to the village railway station in the valley of the Aisne, but it was then impossible to take the cars across the river itself. In their retreat the enemy had caused extensive floods in the river valley, blown up the bridges over a canal and the river, and mined in three places the raised road leading to the other side. The engineers were hard at work repairing the damage, but when the first ambulances made their way to Vandy the rough road over the craters was in a terrible state, constructed as it was with bundles of wood, bricks, and huge stones. Rain fell hard, and the valley bore a dismal aspect with shell-shattered villages on either side and its slopes pitted with shell-holes. Across the road from Vrizy to Vandy gun teams and ammunition limbers, motors and carts ploughed through the mud and the craters. A gun would become stuck in one of them, or a cart was overturned, and each day the blockage of traffic took place, so that it was only after many delays that cars were able to reach Semide with wounded.

The infantry pressed on and the *postes* of the various regiments followed as quickly as possible. For a short time a fine red-bricked château, the Maison Rouge, served as the most advanced aid-post; then a house in Le Chesne, the relay post being at Ballay. From Le Chesne to Vouziers, where the *ambulance* and the Convoy headquarters were now established, progress was slow; it often took several hours for a car to move a kilometre, stopping every few minutes while something was hauled out of the ditch, or following behind a horse-cart, unable to pass it owing to the stream of traffic on the other side of the road. The construction of a bridge over another road at Quatre Champs was slow, and it was necessary to take a narrow and circuitous route round the village over a fearful road. A string of traffic waited to pass along it on either side; in daytime it was not unusual to take hours to get through, and at night, when it was pitch black and raining, the muddle became worse. The entrance to Vouziers, across the valley, was made over roads several inches deep in water. As soon as the infantry crossed the canal at Le Chesne, where the Germans had put up a somewhat stiffer fight than usual, the advance became very rapid,

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and not infrequently the Division was unable to keep in contact with the enemy. When the engineers—ignoring the old conventionalities of the war, and working at night with a blaze of lights—had thrown bridges across the canal, the cars were able to push on to Louvergny. White flags had been hoisted by the retiring army over the buildings in which the villagers were sheltering as a warning to the French gunners of the whereabouts of the people. After Louvergny the next aid-post was at Vendresse, but within twenty-four hours the cars went further ahead to Omicourt and St. Aignan, the *ambulance* moving from Vouziers to Le Chesne. The Convoy took up its headquarters at Vendresse on November 9th, having spent the previous night at Le Chesne, and it remained billeted at a former *Soldatenheim* until the Armistice had been signed. Vendresse was full of civilians, most of them old men, women and children, and they showed every kindness, eager to tell of their hardships and trials during the four years of captivity, and loud in their appreciation of *les anglais*.

With this the active service of S.S.A. 19 came to an end. Following on the cessation of hostilities, a certain amount of transport work for civilian refugees was carried out in the Vendresse district, and the next two months were spent mainly at Suippes and at Malzéville, near Nancy. But, interesting though some of their experiences were during these months, no one was sorry when the arrangements for demobilisation were completed, and the Convoy rolled back to Malo towards the end of January. They reached Headquarters on January 29th, 1919, and the last day of the month saw the final disbanding of S.S.A. 19.

The Groupement "Friends' Unit."

In December, 1915, at the request of the French medical authorities, a small section of cars was formed at Dunkirk to serve the *Hôpital d'Evacuation* No. 10. At that time the *Hô. E.* 10 was located in the goods-yard of the railway station, occupying there a large hangar furnished with such bare necessities of hospital equipment as its functions as a clearing station demanded. Twelve ambulances and seventeen drivers were found and duly enrolled on the strength of the *Services Automobiles*. The formation was officially designated the "*Groupement Sanitaire Friends' Unit*," but in everyday talk it was always known more simply, if less explicitly, as "F.U."

The work of the Groupement centred in the military area of Dunkirk. Three cars were detailed to serve the needs of the large hospital at Zuydcoote, the reminder being engaged for the most part in collecting patients from the various French regiments *en repos* in the district, taking patients from the *Hô. E.* 10 to hospitals in or near the town, and evacuating men from these hospitals to the ambulance trains bound for the interior. Apart from this routine, the cars were held "on call" for dealing with accident cases or casualties during air raids or bombardments in the neighbourhood of Dunkirk. Thus the work went on without any outstanding features until September, 1916, when the Unit was asked to provide another complete Convoy for service with the French Army Corps then occupying the Nieuport sector. Of this Convoy (S.S.A. 19),

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the staff of F.U. formed the nucleus. The *Chef* of the Groupement became the *Chef-Adjoint* of the Convoy, taking with him a number of drivers who had by now gained a very considerable experience which would prove valuable in their new work with the French Army.

For the re-formed Groupement the second phase of its existence opened busily. For it was left with a reduced number of cars and drivers, but with no reduction of the work with which it had to cope, until a French formation came to the *Hô. E.* 10, and F.U. were then attached to the Zuydcoote hospital. There three cars were held continuously on duty, while the rest, now numbering only four, were kept in reserve to assist as required the French ambulances at Dunkirk railway station. But in the early weeks of 1917 the removal of these ambulances from Dunkirk once more threw the whole burden on to the shoulders of F.U., and only a slight measure of relief was obtained by the addition of two cars and drivers to the strength in February.

Meantime it was becoming more and more painfully evident that the strain of the work was telling on the rather varied collection of cars which formed the Groupement. But fortunately, just at this time, S.S.A. 14 was preparing to exchange its "Argyll" ambulances for new "Buicks," and the opportunity thus offered of securing a uniform type of car for the Groupement was not lost. A request was sent in, through the proper channels, to increase the total strength of F.U. to fifteen cars and eighteen men, and to substitute the "Argyll" cars for those formerly in use. This application traversed the devious by-ways of the *voie hiérarchique* until April, when the required sanction was given. But additional work had meanwhile been allotted to the Groupement in connection with military hospitals in the town and neighbourhood, outside the immediate jurisdiction of the *Hô. E.* 10. However, by dint of various expedients work during the period of waiting was successfully accomplished, and by the end of April F.U. achieved its final formation of fifteen ambulances, of which all except one were of uniform type.

The spring and summer months of 1917 were busy ones. In April F.U. was called on at short notice to assist S.S.A. 19 in a heavy rush of work following on an enemy gas attack on the Nieuport front. The work of the *Croix Rouge Française* with the 43rd Division was also handed over to it. Again two months later the F.U. cars were summoned to assist S.S.A. 19, this time for the evacuation of wounded from the aid-posts at Nieuport-Bains and Nieuport-Ville. The increased activity in the most northerly sector of the front during this month was reflected in an ever increasing amount of work in the Dunkirk area, culminating in July, during which month the F.U. cars carried 7,277 patients and covered 21,159 kilometres. During August the volume of work became slightly reduced, but the increasing severity of the aerial attacks on Dunkirk, more particularly during September, gave a good deal of night work. During the night of September 2nd the railway station was heavily bombed, and, of the two cars on duty there, one was damaged by fragments of a bomb, the other being entirely destroyed. The two drivers also lost all their kit and

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the shelter of the wooden shanty used by members of the Groupement on duty there, but themselves escaped unhurt.

By this time the Groupement was working from four different centres, namely :—the *Hô. E.* 10 at Dunkirk station, the *Hô. E* 10 *bis* at Petite Synthe, the *Hôpital Militaire*, Dunkirk, and the Zuydcoote Hospital. The heavy evacuations from these formations provided a strenuous routine of work which was not lightened by the emergency work resulting from the almost nightly air raids of this period. Some drivers will remember particularly the night of November 10th, when the Zuydcoote hospital was bombed by German airmen, thirty-five casualties resulting among patients and staff.

The winter months that followed were comparatively slack, and time was found for a general overhauling of the Groupement's cars. An improved type of body, larger and more convenient for the handling of stretcher cases, was designed and fitted on to several of the cars. During February, 1918, one ambulance was attached for duty to the *Hôpital Militaire* at Calais, but the work proved none too exacting, and the drivers put in their spare time either assisting at the Scottish Churches Recreation Hut or in the X-ray room of the hospital. By the end of March the work of the Groupement was dwindling even more markedly. These were days of uncertainty and rumour ; the great German drive in the south made it doubtful whether the northern front would retain much longer its three-year old lines. The whole of Zuydcoote hospital was evacuated by the French, and this left the cars with a bare minimum of running to be done.

On April 8th, however, F.U. was notified by the *Direction des Services Automobiles* of the 36th *Corps d'Armée* to hold itself in readiness for transfer to Gisors, beyond Amiens. This suggested move raised a number of difficult questions for the Unit authorities. As matters stood at the moment, of course, the expectation of renewed activity in fresh surroundings was tempting to the members of F.U., whose familiarity by then with the roads of Dunkirk and Zuydcoote, Rosendael and Petite Synthe might well be expected to have bred something more than contempt. But the rapidly changing features of the military situation seemed to point to the likelihood of a very considerable recrudescence of activity in the Dunkirk area. The cars of F.U. formed a very valuable nucleus of reserve ambulances, not only for military requirements, but for what in these anxious weeks seemed to be threatened, the possible evacuation of civilian patients on a large scale. To have transferred the Groupement to Gisors in early April would, as later events showed, have been probably only a transient advantage. For before the month was out, French troops had been rushed north to Flanders to help in stemming the German onslaught on Kemmel, the Zuydcoote hospital was reopened, and there was a full renewal of the need for men and cars in the Dunkirk area. Until the end of June, when the French Divisions were withdrawn from their place in the British front, the work continued steadily. On June 29th orders were received for five ambulances to be detached for duty at Haringhe, where a French *Hô. E.* was being evacuated

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Plate XXI L. J. CADBURY

H. WATTS. Facing p. 128

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and closed down, and four others for a like purpose at Terdeghem. After the completion of these duties, and similar ones at Arneke, the Groupement once more enjoyed a period of comparative quiet at Dunkirk. By this time F.U. was undertaking practically the whole of the ambulance transport for both French military and civilian authorities in that district, and the frequent attacks on the town by hostile aircraft still provided a good deal of night work. But on the whole the Groupement remained rather less active during the dog-days of 1918. A certain number of cars and drivers however were detailed in rotation during these slack months for duty with the French Civilian Evacuation Section, which was then working in the British Second Army area with Oxelaere as its centre, a reinforcement which was frequently of great value to that section of the Unit.

Towards the end of September the French Sixth Army was brought to Flanders in preparation for the final Allied advance in Belgium, and it was evident that F.U. was not likely to remain on routine work much longer. The cars were once more stationed in their old quarters at Zuydcoote and Petite Synthe, and at the *Hôpital Militaire* in the town. But on October 3rd, a few days after the combined offensive in the north had opened, the Groupement was transferred to the large *Hô. E.* at Haringhe, and with this opened the most strenuous chapter of F.U.'s history. The French troops had just gone into action and there was a steady flow of wounded into this clearing station from the Passchendaele-Dixmude line. Three front-line convoys brought patients into the hospital, while F.U., with ten ambulances, along with a half section of an American "Ford" convoy, was responsible for keeping the hospital clear. This was no light task when evacuations had to be made down to Bergues, Zuydcoote, and Dunkirk, and often as far as Bourbourg and Gravelines. For the first forty-eight hours at Haringhe cars and drivers were at work almost without pause. But a French section replaced the American cars, and a re-arrangement of the shifts increased the total forces available for evacuation, so that drivers were able, not only to get some rest themselves, but to give some attention to their ambulances. During October the journeys made by F.U. cars reached the total of 28,844 kilometres, or an average of 2,404 kilometres for each car in the month.

By the end of October the enemy had retreated far beyond the old devastated area. The *Hô. E.* was moved forward to Iseghem, near Roulers, and the Groupement was stationed for duty at the Ambulance du Fort, Roulers. There the work was largely of a routine character again, and not over strenuous. But it did not last long; for on November 19th (the Armistice having been fitly celebrated in the billets) the Groupement was ordered to return to Dunkirk, and once more its drivers were traversing the familiar rounds from Zuydcoote and the *Hôpital Militaire*. The bulk of the work was now provided by the transport required for returning prisoners of war, who were daily arriving at Dunkirk by sea; and F.U. cars met all the ships entering the docks with these *rapatriés*. Ambulance work in the strict sense had dwindled to a minimum, but the new type of ambulance body proved of great value in carrying

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great bundles of clothing for the use of the returned prisoners. Such duties continued until January 15th, 1919, when orders were received for the demobilisation of the Groupement; and this event, too, was fitly celebrated.

The history of F.U. could scarcely provide material for a record of wandering and adventure like the full-fledged *Sections Sanitaires*, moving with their Divisions and engaging in front area work. Except for the last weeks of the war, its work was confined to a narrow area of the war-zone and gave few chances of excitement or interest. But throughout its existence the Groupement always had a distinct corporate feeling of its own, which greatly helped its members in carrying out their duties, routine or otherwise, to the satisfaction of the authorities under whose direction they were placed.

Relations with the French.

These accounts of the French Convoys, sadly incomplete though they must be, may perhaps have given some idea of the nature of their duties and the worth of their achievements. Their position, isolated British formations in the midst of the French armies, though similar to that of several other Red Cross Sections, was nevertheless a peculiar one, and it will perhaps be of interest to reprint in these pages some passages from the Section History of S.S.A. 19, on "Our Relations with the French." They are necessarily personal in their references, and in detail of course apply to this particular Convoy; but it may safely be said that they are typical of the experience of the others as well :—

. . . It has been a peculiar position, and a privileged one, that of a Convoy of Englishmen working with the French and working with them so closely as we have done. It may be that we know but little of the things that are passwords amongst our friends at home—save of the 51st and 62nd Divisions who were thrown into the furnace by our side in those desperate July days, but for two years we have lived with the French, have eaten of their salt, and have learned to appreciate their worth and their achievements as perhaps few others can.

Looking back, one's heart warms even at the bare enumeration of the units we have served. First there were the Zouaves, wild, merry fellows, desperate in battle, with their two battalions of *Joyeux* sequestered at Oost Dunkerque. Them we knew but little, for they were soon relieved by the 29th Division—" the good old Twenty-Ninth," as it will always be to us, with the sturdy Fusiliers Marins who " marché-d avec toujours," as convoy parlance has it. The 3rd Regiment, the 141st, the 165th—who will forget those figures on the collars of the blue coats, and how many memories do they recall? The cellar at Nieuport-Bains amongst the rabbit-warren of *boyaux*; visits to the men in the front line and to the observation posts, where one was always welcomed and shown the sights (it was a quiet sector between whiles); the Ville by night and the confusion and rush of the gas attacks; the still yellow dunes. . . .

Then comes the stubborn dogged Flanders fighting, with its jumble of tired unknown regiments and endless wounded, unshaven, dirty, and pitiful. Strenuous days these, with but little time for the social graces, but one cannot work with good fellows without coming to know them, and there is many a *brancardier* we should be glad to see again.

It is strange what odd inconsequent things remain in one's memory—one cheerfully forgets the date of Waterloo and remembers each herring-boned letter of the motto on grandmother's tea-cosy—but doubtless there is a reason for it and it is all for the best. Thus, the struggle for the Passchendaele Ridge and Houthulst Forest raged and swayed, and, looking back, one member at least of this Section finds his most frequent memories of that time to be such things as the merry priest-brancardiers of the *G.B.D.* at Woesten; the popping-up from the Reninghe road ditch of the head and shoulders of some *poilu*, cheered by the sight of somebody in greater danger than himself, and his expressive gesture urging one to yet greater speed; and the indescribable lusciousness of a hunk of bread and a plateful of greasy mashed potatoes from the bowels of the *cuisine roulante* at Paratonnerres.

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Then in mid-November it was the old coast sector again; four months later, with the opening of the German offensive, the first long chapter of the Convoy's history closed and a new one began. We remained with the 29th but a month longer, for early in May it went to Verdun, carrying off all our old friends, and knew us no more.

Colonel P——, head of the medical services, no more will you delight our eyes by cycling slowly down the main street in carpet slippers and unbuttoned tunic, humming a little song and swaying rhythmically from side to side; for the last time have you climbed into the car, saying "Now I will to go 'ome," and whistled and waved your hand to the girl at the *estaminet* door; never again shall we see you leading our late chef up and down the street at Vieille Eglise one busy Sunday morning for the perfection of his French, repeating and making him repeat that *le ciel n'est pas plus pur que le fond de mon cœur*, or, arm in arm with some random *poilu*, your little cap with its five gold stripes askew on the back of your head, laughing and joking as though he were own brother to you; no, it is past, all that (and our little differences of opinion too), but it will be long before we forget you, Colonel P——.

Clear cut, too, is the memory of Captain de P——, *Médecin-chef* of the 141st. Tall, aristocratic, Anglo-Saxon almost in appearance and temperament—where is it that one best recalls his genial figure? In that loose khaki jacket, discussing the affairs of mice and men at the Bains, or, quiet and capable, bringing order out of chaos after a gas attack at the Ville? Or as we saw him last, sitting reading at the table or working quickly and skilfully by the light of the lamp in the cellar at Domart? Wherever it be, it is as a perfect gentleman and a staunch friend of the Convoy that he will be remembered.

And then there is V——, indefatigable photographer and most excellent of organisers, another very good friend of ours—was it not to his foresight that we owed our dug-out at Paratonnerres? An incurably smoky stove—luscious toast thick with marmalade—deep sleep, packed like sardines, on the grubby floor—who will forget that bare, unlovely little *abri* that was almost home? . . .

With the 120th it was the *brancardiers* with whom we became most intimate. And in course of time one was no longer merely *le conducteur anglais*, but the proud possessor of a name which, though it might remind one curiously of one's reflection in a convex mirror, yet served most excellently. One was a personality at last. It could hardly be otherwise; arriving from the *G.B.D.*, we were welcome for the mails and the latest *tuyaux* we brought; being *en subsistence* we shared *la soupe* and marvelled (audibly) at the skill and ingenuity of the cook or shrugged our shoulders and said—"*C'est la guerre*" when *ravitaillement* failed; we came round again, tired and often somewhat breathless, all through the night and day in times of rush, and we shared the floor and the reek of the common dug-out when things were easier.

* * * * * * *

Did but space permit, "Dug-outs we have known" or "*Postes* pleasant and not so pleasant," might form the subject of an article apart. The dark vaulted Domart cellar should hold the central place, for it is there that our thoughts will most often return. It was such a strangely contradictory place—for the first day or two white table linen, a brave spread of crockery that was always clean because always new, and such a glut of good things as to render us independent of the precarious nightly ration cart. And up the stairs and out in the sunshine was the little village, with its eerie deserted streets and tangled telephone wires that seemed more sinister and more tangled with every trip. And then—what followed. And little Sergeant L——, who never once stayed down below when there was a car to be loaded, pushing his way through the patient crowd of gassed and wounded to display the clean shirt he had found, and the blue ribbon laced along its border.

The *Mairie* at Châtillon on the hill should figure with the courteous Sergeant-Major of the 38th, whose guests we were at meals; and at the other end of the scale there would be Vandières, most crowded and foulest of cellars. Going down out of the cool night air at two or three in the morning, it was like a blow in the face, and one awoke dizzy and as though intoxicated. M——, with his halting scholarly English and interesting brown-bearded face, was amongst the *brancardiers* who slept down there and seemed to thrive on it; and the little Breton cook who looked so strangely out of place, working in a looted civilian cap, waistcoat and pair of trousers. Poor little S——, who will never again gabble nonsense thirteen to the dozen and give his famous imitation of the motor-car, was there too. . .

* * * * * * * *

A record such as this of our relations with the French can serve merely as a framework on which to shape one's own more personal memories. Looking back over these pages, one is very conscious of the gaps on the framework. It is the spirit, the atmosphere of it all, that defies recapture. Unity—that is perhaps the keynote of it. We were no longer outsiders, foreigners—the barriers

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were down, broken by the force of common interests, common joys, and common bad times; they were down, one felt, not only as regarded our immediate neighbours, or even our Division, but with France itself.

And the effect?

It may be that in future years a savoury dish will no longer be a *machin* to us, or *Bon Dieu de pinard!* our fearsomest oath; it may be that we shall forget all the different kinds of whistlings and bangings we have learnt, and our irregular verbs, and just how the house roof and the shell-holes and the fallen trees and the dead horses lay on this road or on that; it may be (and Heaven grant it) that we shall never again crawl along on the old 'bus in bottom gear, and hear the cry—*Doucement, camarade, doucement!* and there are many things that this strange chapter in our lives has taught us, and which will stay with us always.

Chiefest amongst them, we have cast away a lot of foolish prejudices and narrow insularity, and have learnt instead a lasting appreciation of and sympathy with the achievements, endurance and sufferings of the French *poilu*, and, through him, of that country which is "every man's second Motherland."

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CHAPTER V

THE AMBULANCE TRAINS.

IN the development of the Friends' Ambulance Unit, a very definite stage was marked by its adoption of British ambulance train work. It would hardly be an overstatement to say that up to the spring of 1915 the Unit had lived mainly on emergencies. The civilian work at Ypres and Poperinghe, like the French Convoys, had grown, as we have seen, from no pre-arranged plan; even the less exciting enterprises at Dunkirk had been the creation of unexpected necessities. But the days of knight-errantry on the Western front were numbered, and when, after the Second Battle of Ypres, the war settled down to a stationary ding-dong routine, the Unit had to acclimatise itself to a new atmosphere. More than this, it had to find new outlets for those of its workers who were left unemployed by the closing down of several of its out-stations, and for new members who were being drafted out to France. Now to undertake the staffing of an ambulance train was something quite different from anything the Unit had hitherto attempted. Life would not only be strenuous but regularised; the work would be more systematised and so less interesting than that to which the Unit had for the most part been accustomed. But the experiment was made, first with No. 16 Ambulance Train in August, 1915, and although the innovation may not have been a welcome one, later events showed it to have been a wise one. The work of the ambulance trains was not only of inestimable value to the sick and wounded, but it provided a channel through which the services of large numbers of the Unit's members could be utilised during the long years of trench warfare, when the emergency work of earlier days was quite beyond the bounds of possibility.

It may be well to explain at the beginning of this chapter the circumstances under which the four ambulance trains staffed by the Unit were successively taken over from their previous crews. Nos. 16 and 17 Ambulance Trains, presented to the British Red Cross Society by the United Kingdom Flour Millers, were brought out to France in the spring of 1915, but were manned at first by R.A.M.C. personnel. Sir Arthur Lawley, the Commissioner, was anxious that these Red Cross trains should be staffed by Red Cross crews, and in August the R.A.M.C. staffs were withdrawn, to be replaced, on No. 17 by members of the B.R.C.S. itself, on No. 16 by members of the F.A.U. At the end of November, owing to the departure of many B.R.C.S. men in response to the Derby scheme, No. 17 also was handed over to the Unit. As it became

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harder for them to provide men for all their various activities, the B.R.C.S. also gave up No. 11 train to a Unit staff in January, 1916. By now all three of the Society's trains were being run by Unit members, but later in that year the Unit found itself, owing to the operation of the Military Service Acts, with more men on its hands than work to be done. Requests were made to the British authorities for fresh work within their area, for stretcher-bearing with front-line troops, for a field ambulance, or for a casualty clearing station. There was a sincere desire to avoid the " back of the front " and to have a chance of bearing a larger share of the dangers, but all these proposals were declined on the ground that such functions could be allotted only to enlisted men. There was nothing for it then but to turn again to the lines of communication, and to provide the staff for a fourth ambulance train. The British authorities offered No. 5, and accordingly this train was taken over in August, 1916.

No attempt has been made to disguise the fact that the Unit took up this ambulance train work, more particularly in the case of the later trains, as the only possible outlet for its surplus numbers, while all the time it would have preferred employment which, if not in essence more useful, would bring its workers nearer to the actual fighting line. In all sincerity it may be said that the Unit never wished to avoid the more acute hardships and dangers of the campaign by taking advantage of its members' exemption from military service. For any unenlisted Red Cross body, and especially perhaps the F.A.U., the situation was almost inevitable, but, though the official point of view was realised, there were many members who felt acutely the meagreness of their share of sacrifice. It was largely for this very reason that service on the ambulance trains called for qualities of endurance and patience of a very high order. Not that it was uniformly monotonous or entirely devoid of danger and excitement; but on the whole it was a life of ceaseless routine, loading and unloading, cleaning and polishing, of long journeys varied only by long halts. Living quarters were extremely cramped, opportunities for rest and sleep were often few and far between, leave was necessarily infrequent, and each train was under stricter discipline, and was possibly a more integral part of the Army organisation, than any other section of the Unit.

But taken all in all, the work of these trains was perhaps the most consistently and solidly useful work of any kind that the Unit undertook, and it is just because it was lacking in the spectacular element that its worth is apt to be overlooked. If ever there was a chance to show that monotonous or menial tasks could be carried out with something more than mere mechanical efficiency, train life provided an opportunity. For it cannot have been easy to infuse the work with that spirit of human sympathy which meant so much to each patient individually. Load followed load, year in, year out, always the same lines of blanketed figures on stretchers, always the same straggling processions of walking wounded, ticketed and classified, to the accustomed eye dangerously like so much human freight to be picked up here and dumped down somewhere else. Statistics may show how much work was officially performed, but perhaps

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the greatest achievement of the staffs of the trains was their retention, in the face of so much that was merely mechanical, of a great measure of devotion and enthusiasm.

Ambulance Train Life.

The individual histories of the four trains on which Unit staffs worked are bound to have much in common. For they were all in effect part of the Army Medical Service on the lines of communication, and as such were all equally liable to the fluctuations of work which the ebb and flow of military activity produced. Few sections of the Unit were so closely in touch with the changing conditions of warfare on the Western front, now offensive, now defensive, now stagnant. Save in exceptional circumstances a strenuous period for one train was the same for another, and when all was quiet along the front the activity of the trains diminished all round. It may be well then to give some account of the common features of the life of the trains before attempting to record their separate stories.

And first, of the trains themselves: for differences in structure made differences in the life and work on board. The earliest ambulance trains organised for use with the Expeditionary Force were composed of assorted French rolling-stock, varying from covered goods-waggons fitted with iron frameworks, on which stretchers could be rested, to first-class corridor coaches of the best type. Nos. 5 and 11 belonged to this early class, a medley of green-painted wagons and coaches of the various French lines, some linked up with corridors, others unconnected, well-sprung and ill-sprung, but forming on the whole, with all their improvisations, an efficient if not luxurious type of ambulance train. Meanwhile the "khaki trains," of which Nos. 16 and 17 were typical, were being designed and built in England. They were composed of uniform English rolling-stock, rebuilt and furnished inside with a view to the greater comfort of the patients and increased convenience of working. For stretcher cases the lying-wards provided spring beds, arranged in three tiers down each side of an entire coach, with double doors in the middle on each side. For walking patients there were ordinary third-class corridor coaches, known as the sitting-up wards; though in case of emergency these could of course also be used for lying patients. In addition there were coaches fitted up as kitchens, a dispensary, an office, store-rooms, and living-quarters for medical officers, nursing sisters, and personnel.

The staff of an ambulance train consisted usually of two or three medical officers, three nursing sisters, and about forty-seven non-commissioned officers and men. Of these the Unit supplied the last class, choosing, under approval of the Commanding Officer of the train, its own N.C.O.'s. At their head was a staff-sergeant, with sergeants or corporals responsible for the management of the lying- and sitting-wards, stores, dispensary, and office; the orderlies were divided among the wards and the various duties in kitchens, store-rooms, and staff-coaches, necessary to the existence of this small nomadic community.

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The general ambulance train service, of which these four trains formed a part, was directed from the Headquarters of the Lines of Communication (for a long time situated at Abbeville), where the A.D.M.S., Ambulance Trains, acted as the connecting link between the requirements of the hospitals and casualty clearing stations and the authorities responsible for railway transport.

What then was the common round of life on these trains? It is a hard question to answer in a short space, because, with all the regularity of working, there was really a great measure of variety and minor episodes, born of the change of scene and the peculiar conditions of an ever-moving existence. The train lying one morning down at Rouen or Boulogne will find itself up at Contay or Lapugnoy the next; you have the same train, the same people, the same jobs, yet the different surroundings seem to make indefinable differences in them all. But generally speaking, time divided itself naturally into what was spent "in garage" or "on the move." Except of course in times of pressure, trains were not always moving; for several days a train might be lying empty on some siding, sometimes in dignified and rural solitude, or sometimes alongside one or other of its sister-trains, or sometimes scarcely discoverable amid surrounding rows of ammunition trains, coal trucks, troop trains, ration trains, or noisy shunting-engines. It might be at the base, in the busy Gare Centrale at Boulogne, or in the bewildering stretch of curving lines at Fontinettes, near Calais, or at Sotteville, near Rouen, where the interminable sidings, dreary enough in themselves, lay not far from the pleasant banks of the Seine and the steep wooded hills of the valley. Or it might be garaged at some centre nearer the front, at Blendecques or Longueau, or further up beside some of the C.C.S.'s, at Lapugnoy, near Béthune, or Grovetown, on the Somme, to mention only a few of many.

But though in garage there were no patients on board, life could be busy enough for the personnel. It was during these intervals of waiting that most of the work of cleaning the train and keeping its equipment in order was carried out. Inside and outside everything had to be kept as clean and orderly as if it were a fixed instead of a moving hospital. Floors and beds, windows and brasses, plates, mugs, cutlery, instruments—everything needed scrubbing and polishing after each trip with patients; the proper complement of stretchers and blankets had always to be maintained (by fair means or foul); and often, when time allowed, there would be a great scouring of the outside paint of the coaches. These were the chief functions of the ward-orderlies between trips, while the other members of the crew had other duties. The sergeant in charge of stores would set off with a party to fetch rations from the nearest A.S.C. store, not only for the staff of the train but for perhaps three or four hundred patients in anticipation of the next trip. The office staff would have time to keep abreast of the records and returns required of them. Or at some garages (not too popular, these) there would be "water-fatigues" to be done, and the whole personnel would be found trudging and stumbling over points and wires, dodging shunting trucks, bearing every sort of vessel suitable for carrying water for the tanks of the train. In such tasks (and there were many more), it can

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easily be understood that the weather was something to be reckoned with, and garage life in the winter months, with practically no heating and often with spells of frost that froze the water tanks solid, was by no means idyllic.

But sooner or later a " movement order " would arrive for the waiting train, an engine would shunt down to pick it up, and it would move off to the railhead to collect patients. In some cases, three or four stations would be called at before the journey down to the base was started. Patients were brought down to the railway from the C.C.S.'s, and the lying-cases were loaded on to the train with the help of stretcher-bearing parties. The train's medical officers and N.C.O.'s, posted outside the train, were responsible for distributing patients over the various wards. It was often a very strenuous business; many sidings were ill-adapted for the purpose, and frequently it took many hours to complete the task at some places of call. Naturally the difficulties were increased when loading was going on in darkness or in bad weather. A night loading in the autumn of 1915 is described in the following extract from an orderly's account:—

Down in a hedged field at the end of the straggling mining village lies the casualty clearing station, some two-score large tents, their sagging roofs bedaubed with mixed colours to give some measure of invisibility from above. Along one side stretches a line of tall elm trees, and a cold night wind is blowing fiercely through their thinning branches. Behind there rises a low hillock, holding up against the driving clouds a great stone Calvary that looks down on the mean little village.

" Something big " has been going on up at the front since the early morning: you hear many rumours of the long-prepared attack, and the guns are still booming heavily a few miles away with deep continuous reverberations. Since midday the clearing station has been full to overflowing, but still an endless line of motor ambulances moves down along the crowded road from the fighting line, through the village, and into the muddy field. It is night now, starless and dark as pitch, and a lashing rain is driven hard in your face before a bitter and rising wind; but still the cars are discharging their pitiful loads in dreary succession when the train is brought into the siding which serves this desolate little camp.

From the train itself you can see scarcely anything of the clearing station to-night; only the headlights of the cars as they turn in through the gate, and a few hurricane-lamps flickering here and there. Near one end of the train, at the wooden foot-bridge which crosses the stream separating the camp from the railway track, there stands a powerful acetylene flare, casting a circle of vivid light on the deep mud of the path. Save for three or four feeble oil-lamps on the ground beside the long darkened train, this is the only light at the loading place. A few moments of uncertain waiting, and the first stretcher comes down, its weary bearers slithering and stumbling in the watery mire. As you watch the flare you see them emerge suddenly from the utter blackness beyond into the fierce glare of the light; they halt for a moment, while a cloaked officer standing on the bridge raises the waterproof sheet which protects the wounded man's face from the beating rain; a name is given and noted; the covering is dropped over the head, and the bearers move on again, seeming to vanish as if by magic as they pass with their burden out of the light into the enveloping blackness. A pause, and another stretcher enters the circle of light; the same words pass, the same motions, and it too moves on, blotted out as suddenly as it appeared. Watching this, time after time, you feel as if a picture were being cast on a screen, and flashed off, over and over again: for there is something cruelly mechanical about it all. . . .

Meanwhile, up at the far end of the train—a full three hundred yards trudge in ankle-deep mud—the lying-down wards are gradually filling up: more slowly than usual, for the bearers to-night have the gait of men worn out, almost disheartened, by prolonged and ceaseless toil. The long coaches, their interiors gleaming white in contrast with the outer darkness, were clean and fresh-smelling when the first patient was lifted in through the wide double doors. But now, after half an hour or so, the indefinable but unmistakable smell of wounded men straight from the trenches is making itself felt, and the spotless floor is stained with muddy prints, and running with water where the rain has dripped from the stretchers or scudded in through the open doors. The beds are filled, but after such a day as this has been, there are more men to be carried than the beds can hold; every available square foot of space is needed. Stretchers lie all down the central corridor, and leave you a passage of only ten or twelve inches;

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in the dispensary and in the treatment room they lie side by side on the floor; at the end of the train, one of the *fourgons*, dark and ill-sprung, holds a dozen and more. Of the sitting-up compartments every one is used for lying cases, stretchers on seats and floor. Walk up the train from one end to the other, and there will seem to be not a corner that has not its occupant: everywhere the same inert shapes under the dark rough blankets; everywhere the same all-pervading stench, thick, sickening.

It is a slow and weary loading-up, harder than we have ever had before, and when at last the doors are closed and fastened, the clock of the village church will soon be striking three. Slowly the train pulls off in the darkness, grating sharply over the roughly laid points of the siding, and the long journey to the base is begun. . . .

So the trip is begun, and with it the work proper starts for the staff. A trip might be short or long, six hours, perhaps, or thirty-six, but the essential tasks for the personnel were the same. Patients had all to be fed, four or five hundred or more, from the two small kitchens of the train, and as they were often on board for the full twenty-four hours, this meant the serving of three or four meals. Dressings had to be seen to; in times of heavy fighting doctors and sisters would be working on this for hours on end in the cramped space and stifling atmosphere of the wards. For purposes of records the "particulars" (name, number, regiment, etc.) of every single patient had to be taken down. And there was a multitude of smaller tasks that filled every moment of the time spent on the journey. The progress of these heavy trains over lines congested with traffic was always slow, sometimes cruelly so, and delay imposed a severe strain on patients and staff alike. There were interminable halts on the way, which aggravated the weary impatience of sick and wounded to be done with all this movement from one place to another and finally at rest in the base hospital. It was no small strain to tend helpless cases for hour after hour, or to watch death coming nearer and nearer to some while the train crept only a few miles nearer to its goal in a whole long afternoon. Remember too that in times of crisis, loads were packed on to trains far in excess of their normal capacity. Down the floors between the tiers of beds stretchers were laid end to end, leaving a passage-way of only a few inches; they lay in every spare corner of other coaches; in sitting-coaches where every compartment was already packed full, men crouched, huddled in the corners at the ends of the corridors. The whole business of feeding and seeing to the needs of a trainload of men like this, where to move about was to pick one's steps over broken and sensitive limbs, was a physical and mental strain far more severe than the hardest work of an ordinary hospital. Nor was there the clean brightness of the hospital ward to refresh one. The coaches down the whole length of the train were filled with a foul, heavy atmosphere that nothing could dispel while patients were on board, during bitter nights and baking summer afternoons alike. Altogether it was not surprising that the amount of illness among the personnel of the ambulance trains was proportionately higher than in any other branch of the Unit's work.

When the base was reached the work of transferring the patients to the ambulances awaiting them was begun. And as in loading, the varying conditions at different stations might make unloading a speedy or a tedious procedure.

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But still it was largely a matter of routine, and with practice and experience in its unsuspected details it could be " speeded up " considerably.

But even when the last stretcher had been handed out to the bearers and the last " sitter " had clambered down the footboards, there remained work for the train's crew. A certain amount of cleaning out of wards and coaches was always necessary as soon as the train was clear. In busy times a train would often have to go up the line again as soon as it had unloaded its cargo, and the return journey had to provide time for preparing to receive the next load, and time for the staff to get some sleep as well. Or frequently the base hospitals would fill up a train which had arrived late at night with a fresh load of convalescent men for the hospital ships to England. Thus a journey from the front down to Rouen would often mean a second stage within a few hours on to Le Hâvre, or a train discharging at Etaples would have to follow up that trip with another to the Gare Maritime at Calais; there were even occasions when fresh patients were being loaded at one end of a train before the off-loading had been completed at the other! But these " base-to-base " journeys were not usually in themselves so trying as those from the front. The patients thus carried were by that time mostly on the road to recovery; they were clean and their nerves were rested; and with the prospect of " Blighty " the wards would sometimes be pervaded with a cheerfulness which other trips were far from possessing.

Such in the barest outline was the work of the ambulance trains. A full account of the routes followed and the various ebbs and flows of activity would almost involve a study of the military operations during these years. But an examination of the chart reproduced in this book will show at a glance how variable was the pressure of work. Broadly speaking, the opening of the Somme Battles on July 1st, 1916, marked a great change in the life of the ambulance trains. After that date, with the greatly increased numbers of men in the field, the extended British front, and the growing intensity of the offensives, their work unhappily was far more severe than any previous to that time.

We dare not attempt in these pages to touch on all those minor incidents and worries of the daily round which made up the stock-in-trade of ambulance train " shop." The difficulties of mails reaching the train, for instance, or the strange confusions involved in patients' kits; the vagaries of the stretcher-bearers at such-and-such a station; the quality of the bread issued at this or that ration dump, or the virtues of the incinerator somewhere else; the insoluble problem of whether lying-wards really had a harder time than the sitting-coaches, or the hundred-and-one anecdotes and legends of various officials of the A.T. service—all these fascinating topics, alas! fall without our province.

But a few lines are certainly due on the social life of the ambulance trains. Circumstances often left the personnel with a good deal of time hanging heavily on their hands; to find suitable means of passing it was of great importance for the welfare and morale of the train. But the restrictions were obvious; the ever-present uncertainty of the trains' movements, the cramped space within

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the coaches, and the not too congenial surroundings of sidings and goods-yards, all made normal recreations rather difficult. Improvisation however worked wonders, and there was usually found some means of passing spare time. In favourable weather cricket or football matches were often played on strange pitches with the teams of other trains or neighbouring C.C.S.'s, though more than once they had to be left unfinished through the arrival of an untimely "movement order." The granting of leave when it seemed likely that the train would remain garaged for some time was always eagerly anticipated. In fact (low be it spoken), a Commanding Officer's most admired quality was often his capacity for gauging generously the time his train could safely be left unattended. On these occasions it was possible for men to set out on long walks, welcome after the confined spaces of corridors and waggons, or even by judicious "lorry-hopping" to visit places at a considerable distance. But woe betide the luckless who returned to find their train departed! Will they ever forget the feeling of desolation on returning to find the familiar line of coaches gone, leaving what seemed a hideous blank in the landscape? For such there might be days and days of wandering in troop-trains and goods-trains, countless interviews with harassed R.T.O.'s, cheerless meals of iron rations, before at last they could overtake their elusive home. But even these terrors could not spoil the pleasure of walks in the open country, through quiet villages, or about the streets and churches of towns far removed from devastation. The lines of communication were often dreary and sordid enough in all conscience, but many A.T. men still have kindly recollections of such places as the hills over above Blendecques, with the great Flemish plain spread out below, or of looking from the windy sand-dunes of Etaples across the estuary to the dark pinewoods of Le Touquet with the twin lighthouses standing white in the sun.

But it was not always possible to find exercise or recreation out of doors; the climate of northern France is almost as fickle as our own and certainly as severe. And often enough the surroundings were far from attractive. The blasted countryside and shattered villages of the Somme did not tempt the wayfarer much after his first curiosity had been satisfied. But on board the trains there was usually some activity on foot to pass the days of waiting. Probably no sections of the Unit showed greater enterprise and ingenuity in these directions (considering their handicaps) than did the ambulance trains. Libraries were formed and surprisingly representative collections of books were made available. In some cases the officers of trains gave lectures on medical subjects, and there were frequent miscellaneous lectures and debates from time to time. Concerts were organised and short plays produced; by skilful manipulation of the collapsible tiers of beds in the lying-wards of the "khaki trains," a comfortable if somewhat elongated concert-hall could be arranged. And some intellectual activity was kept alive by the production of train magazines. No. 16 led the way in this direction with the *Orderly Review*, which was first given to the world in August, 1915, and continued to appear until the final dispersal of the crew. No. 17 followed with several publications, *Lines of Communication*

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the most noteworthy, No. 11 with *The Fourgon;* and when No. 5 was started she followed these distinguished examples with *La Vie Sanitaire.*

To those who knew something of them all, each of the four trains had a very distinct personality, and each was very properly convinced of its own superiority over all comers; nor is it for us to judge between them. But the fact of this friendly rivalry between them was a sign that the experiment of undertaking ambulance train work had been a successful one, since work had been found in which, dull though it often was, men took more than a passing interest. The success of the trains owed much to the energy and help of many persons both within and without the Unit. To Harold Watts, who was the leader of the Unit's staff on No. 16 when the venture was a new one, and later for a time in charge of No. 17's crew, belongs the credit of having initiated the high traditions of discipline and efficiency which ruled all four trains. Between the Unit's Headquarters and the A.D.M.S., Ambulance Trains, there were necessarily many negotiations, great and small, but throughout them all the path was made easy by the kindly consideration that was invariably shown. No less important was the good fortune of the trains themselves in the R.A.M.C. officers who commanded them. When a section of the Unit was working under external control, there was always the danger of a clash of ideals. On rare occasions such difficulties did arise, but these were indeed insignificant when matched with all the sympathy and encouragement shown by the various Officers Commanding trains to their men. In some cases indeed, as many who served on the trains will know, friendships were formed which have outlived service in France.

With these pages of introduction we pass to a short account of the work of the individual trains, in the order in which they were successively staffed by members of the F.A.U.

No. 16 Ambulance Train.

Whatever the virtues of the other ambulance trains, there was always a certain distinction about No. 16. The cynical might ascribe it merely to the superior paintwork of the coaches or the gleaming white of the wards and compartments within; but the closer observer remembered that this was the first of the Unit's four trains, and seniority was not to be lightly forgotten. When the Unit staff were drafted on to No. 16 in August, 1915, they were pioneers in an entirely new field of the Unit's work; they were the first section to undertake regular work for the British Armies in the field and definitely independent from Unit control. But if there were difficulties for them in this position, there were also advantages. The train's staff were all trained together at the camp at Oxhey Grange during July and August, and drafted out as a body on August 14th, 1915. They already had acquired something of the habit of working together before crossing to France, and friendships made during training certainly helped them in the first days of their unfamiliar undertaking. And they were fortunate also in their train, one of the best both in appearance and arrangement then on the line.

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Landing at Boulogne, they received orders to proceed at once to Abbeville, where the train was lying, and they left by rail the same evening. It seemed an endless journey in the dimly-lit carriages, stopping resolutely at every wayside station, but in the early hours they reached Abbeville. The newly-arrived crew stumbled blindly across that maze of sidings and engine-houses and coal-dumps to where their train was lying, and, as the old R.A.M.C. staff had not yet left, spent their first night in the lying-wards. After an inspection and hortatory address by the A.D.M.S. of the Ambulance Train Service the next day, they started to settle down to their new work and their unaccustomed mode of life.

At this period of the war the Western front was comparatively quiet, and enough ambulance trains had by now been transhipped to France to keep pace easily enough with the flow of casualties both from wounds and sickness. In fact right on till the opening of the Battles of the Somme on July 1st, 1916, the only large operation on which the British forces engaged was the Battle of Loos, about six weeks after the train had been taken over. The new staff were fortunate then in having a period of comparatively regular work during which to become habituated to train life. During this time the general service of ambulance trains was divided into two distinct portions. Trains loading at stations between Poperinghe and Berguettes were on the "Northern Route," and evacuated patients either to Boulogne or Etaples; while those collecting their patients further south on the British front were on the "Southern Route," and took them down to the base hospitals at Rouen, Le Tréport, Etretat, or Le Hâvre. A train would be definitely attached to one route or the other, usually for about a month at a time. Trains on the "Northern Route" during these months followed a fairly regular programme: so regular, indeed, that one could forecast with some measure of accuracy the train's movements for a week or two ahead, whereas in later days to foretell a day or two ahead would savour of rashness. The train off-loads at Boulogne, let us say, one evening. It spends the next day or two there, at the side platform of the Gare Centrale, and then moves empty up to Fontinettes, near Calais. When No. 16 first knew Fontinettes, that famous siding had hardly more than seven or eight tracks laid; a British Naval armoured-train lay on one of them, a relic of the early days of the war, and where in a few months the innumerable curved sidings were crowding beside each other, there was a grassy field whereon cricket of a sort could be played. Here the train would stop for a day or so, and then move on to the rural surroundings of Blendecques, beyond St. Omer, or to the neighbouring station of Arques. Then, usually at nine o'clock on the third morning after arrival, the train would move out on its regular round of stations. Hardly ever did this circuit vary; by way of Hazebrouck, the train would go up to the railhead at Bailleul and load up a certain number; returning to Hazebrouck, it would find another batch awaiting its arrival on the platform there; with these added, it turned again and ran up to Rémy, a point on the line near Poperinghe, where the chief load of the round was usually forthcoming; thence back to Hazebrouck, and so on to St. Omer, where usually a number of

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sick patients were brought on; and finally the train took its leisurely course through Calais to Boulogne or Etaples. Such was the "Northern Route," its monotony broken only by an occasional load of convalescents from Etaples to be transferred to the hospital ships at Calais, or by a few runs from Merville and St. Venant.

On the "Southern Route" the distances were longer and the itinerary rather more varied. After off-loading at Rouen (*Rive Gauche*), the train would move at walking-pace to Sotteville, where it would await its turn to go out, sometimes only a few hours, sometimes for four or five days, according to the number of trains lying in garage there. The "first train out" here had the duty of supplying a man to await orders in the little wooden telephone-box on the siding. When these came through, the train would move up to Abbeville, whence after another pause it would be dispatched to loading places at Doullens, Corbie, or Lapugnoy. From the first two, patients were received on arrival, but at Lapugnoy, near Béthune, the train would usually wait two or three days till required by the C.C.S.'s in that neighbourhood. Other ports of call in that district were Lillers and Chocques. When in the spring of 1916 the British front was extended to include the sector between Hulluch and Hébuterne, this brought Barlin, Bruay, and Aubigny into the list of loading-places, and St. Pol became a familiar garage.

During the first weeks of No. 16's history (so far as the Unit is concerned) she was running for the most part on the "Northern Route," with generous intervals between trips and loads not too heavy—a state of affairs regarded in later days as a lost Paradise of L. of C. life. But the staff had their first experience of "battle casualties" on a large scale when the British launched their offensive at Loos on September 25th. The train was at Calais that morning, and the news of a great "push" came through, mingled with that unvarying rumour of optimistic moments, that British troops had landed at Ostend and that Lille had fallen. After a night of confused wanderings the train arrived at Lapugnoy, at dawn the next morning, in time to receive the first rush of casualties from the C.C.S. there. For their first success the attacking divisions had paid a terrible price, and the sight of the clearing station gave some idea of what the day's work had meant in terms of flesh and blood. But the air was full of the highest hopes, and the end of the war seemed suddenly to have drawn near; the flush of victory sustained even the worst cases brought on board—it was a very different atmosphere from that of the later offensives, the horror of Beaumont Hamel or the grim doggedness of Passchendaele. This was the train's first trip down to Rouen, and it returned at once, starting to load up again about 8 p.m. on the 28th. This was a much worse load. The first high expectations of the attack had been shattered, and the breakdown in the weather made the outlook almost hopeless. The first stretchers were carried across in a torrent of rain from the C.C.S. by Cavalry and A.S.C. officers, doing duty for the worn-out stretcher-bearing squad. It was the crew's first taste of a really bad load, and few could forget either the interminable time of loading, the bearers reeling with fatigue, unable to lift their stretchers up to the doors without help, or the aspect of the

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crowded wards inside the train, many of the patients having been brought straight to the train after lying out all night in the open on the battlefield. The trip that followed was long and exhausting, ending at Le Tréport in the early hours of the 30th, when the train returned to the front again without pause. The five trips accomplished during the eight days after Loos taught the crew much in the management of their train.

Work went on steadily throughout the winter, the comparative stagnation on the front bringing a small proportion of wounded to the high figures of sick carried as a result of the hard weather. There was one notably bad load on December 20th, when about 500 gassed patients were brought down from Rémy, part of the result of a surprise German gas attack in the Ypres salient. In other directions a few incidents stood out in the domestic life of the train. About the middle of November, Harold Watts, the original leader of the train's crew, left to take charge of the new Unit staff of No. 17 A.T., his place as staff-sergeant being taken by A. Hal Simpson. At the end of that month came the train's first visit to repair garage, the *Petite Vitesse* at Boulogne, where a fortnight was passed; but Christmas was spent in more agreeable surroundings at Blendecques. March, 1916, was a busier month than most, with eleven trips and nearly 3,500 patients carried. Additional lying accommodation was secured by fitting up racks in the sitting-up coaches, each compartment of which could thus hold five stretchers, two on the seats, two on the racks, and one on the floor. But otherwise there was little to record out of the routine until the Somme offensive opened on July 1st, 1916.

With this commenced a new chapter in the history, not only of No. 16, but of all the other ambulance trains. The old regular alternations between "Northern" and "Southern Routes" went by the board. It may be worth while to quote from an account of No. 16's experience of the opening days of that terrible July :—

On June 29th, 1916, we reached Etaples with a load from the First Army, and were told unofficially that from that day, trains would be running experimentally as though an offensive had opened. We were to remain with the First Army, while Nos. 5 and 2 were to take Calais evacuations. We were innocent or unobservant in those days, for we had no definite expectation of any attack, and were mildly pleased with the route allotted to us. It is in keeping with later experience that we should have wakened at St. Pol the next morning, instead of Lapugnoy. That night we received orders to leave for Doullens at 9 a.m. Now Doullens was a well-established loading-place and not a garage, so we had a hasty water-fatigue after breakfast and prepared for a load. To our surprise we were put into a siding, where we found No. 24 still eating up the food prepared in similar circumstances for their expected patients four days earlier. They told us No. 23 had gone out that morning, and though the checker thought his orders about trains were unusually emphatic, nobody seemed aware that anything striking was taking place. We had leave till 5 o'clock, and upon our return found that No 23 had passed through loaded, that No. 24 had gone to Warlincourt, and that we were to follow as soon as she came down the single line. There had been a big attack, and we had broken through the German lines on a wide front. This news from a balloon observer was confirmed by the sight of field ambulances going up, and endless columns of troops and supplies. From the bank above the train, aeroplanes could be viewed circling round in larger numbers than we had before seen, and excitement mounted higher and higher.

We left Doullens about 9 o'clock, reaching Warlincourt an hour later. As we neared our destination, above the noise of the train we heard our first big bombardment, and the dusk was torn with gun-flashes. From the crest of the hill we could see the actual flame of the discharge

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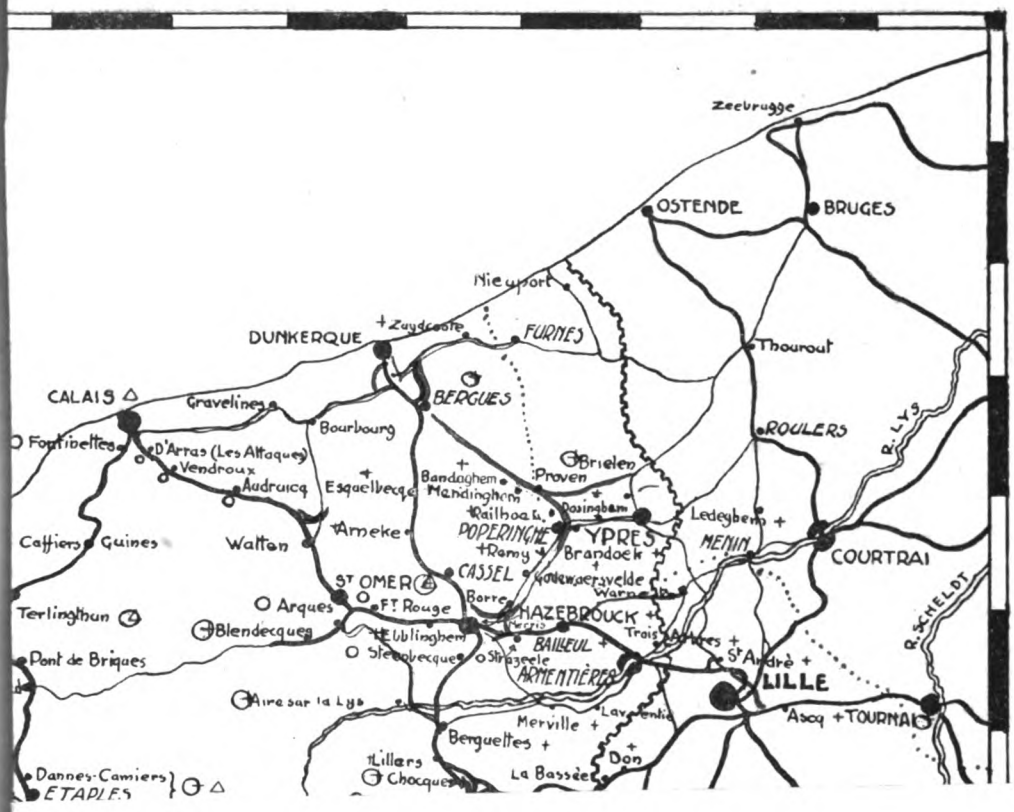
Zeebrugge
OSTENDE
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DUNKERQUE
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FURNES
Thourout
CALAIS
Gravelines
BERGUES
ROULERS
Bourbourg
Fortmolles
D'Arras (Les Attaques)
Vendroux
Audruicq
Esquelbecq
Brielen
Bandaghem
Proven
Mendinghem
Railhoek
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ST OMER
Arques
Ft Rouge
Terlinghun
Blendecques
Eblinghem
HAZEBROUCK
Pont de Briques
Steenbecque
BAILLEUL
ARMENTIÈRES
St André
LILLE
Aire sur la Lys
Merville
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Lillers
Chocques
La Bassée
Don
Dannes-Camiers
ETAPLES
R. LYS
R. SCHELDT

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and the hundreds of Verey lights in the distance. The bombardment—we had hardly learned the word " barrage " in those days—was intense. Earth and sky shook with the concussion while the ear could distinguish nothing but a fierce inchoate roar of sound. The train shook and rattled, and occasionally the thunder of a neighbouring " heavy " drowned all other sound and made the coaches rock. It has been confidently asserted that some of these " heavies " were in a wood beside us, and that shells were coming over from the German side as well. However that may be, we had enough to occupy us as soon as the train stopped. The little siding and the neighbouring fields were covered by a dense crowd of " walking wounded," and as we drew up they made a rush for every door in such numbers that many had to be turned out to await the next train.

All the accommodation was used for " sitters " except the top beds of the lying wards, and a part of " B " ward which was used for " lying officers." Altogether 693 patients were taken aboard, several of them in a very bad state, and we moved off as a heavy thunderstorm burst.

None of us will forget that night. Many patients had come right through with but little attention; their wounds dripped blood and needed instant re-dressing. One officer with a fractured thigh, incredible as it may seem, had dragged himself two miles before he was picked up and taken to a dressing station. All down the wards was a welter of arms and legs sprawled across the corridor, their owners lost to everything but the blessed consciousness that here at last they could sleep undisturbed.

Le Hâvre was our destination, and was reached the next afternoon after a hard journey. On our way to the Gare Centrale for water—the last time we visited it—we passed our first train of German prisoners from the offensive, and viewed them with considerable interest. Our movement order bore the names of Sotteville (cancelled), Abbeville (cancelled), St. Pol (cancelled), Doullens. The Stores, with their usual kindness, arranged for a ration fatigue at 11.30, so we were ready for bed by the time we got there.

Doullens was reached about tea-time, and we started to load up at once with an all-stretcher load, using our fullest capacity—five in each sitting compartment, stretchers down all the floors, with the dispensary and treatment room full. Our second journey down to Le Hâvre was far more tiring than the first. The patients were feeling the reaction from the excitement that had buoyed up their predecessors, and were more seriously wounded.

The journey up was remarkable chiefly for water-fatigues, notably one at Longpré-les-Amiens in which we were assisted and encouraged by many of the inhabitants. Egged on by them we bore water at a smart run and made the most of our time. At St. Pol that afternoon we started again in earnest, passing the " dixies " under two trains and finishing up in a state of collapse, to be revived only by arranging a burnt-offering at the incinerator. A few days later we visited for the first time a spot which became only too familiar in the months that followed—Puchevillers. A military line had been laid along the top of a desolate ridge following its bends and contours, and there with clearing stations on one side and an ammunition dump on the other, we have spent many weary days of waiting, and there we have taken on many a heavy load. The country was bare and uninteresting and the frowsy villages were crammed with troops, while it seemed to us that it was at Puchevillers we got all our worst patients.

Vecquemont was another busy spot, with C.C.S.'s on both sides. The name recalls midnight loadings; scorching noontides, with a swirling of dust above the road through which troops and transport moved as in a fog, while strings of lorries thundered past seeming to shout for joy at the choking clouds they raised; a cricket match against a C.C.S. which we won by a narrow margin amid terrific excitement; lines of patients converging upon the train, and Indian bearers " weak but willin' "; the E.M.O. audibly reporting the evacuation state to the D.M.S.—" Yes, sir, 10 o'clock to-morrow morning," and another night's sleep. . . .

Throughout the month we moved backwards and forwards—Puchevillers, Vecquemont, Gézaincourt, Heilly, load after load, with patients packed closely in stifling heat, always as many as we could take, and always bad cases; we shall not quickly forget July, 1916. . . .

During that month fifteen trips were made, all from front to base, and close on 7,500 patients carried, over 6,000 of whom were wounded. The first half of August was hardly less strenuous, but on the 18th the train was put into repair garage at Boulogne for a fortnight. But work started as heavily as before when the train came out again on September 1st. It was a period of extreme pressure on the railways, and traffic blocks were frequent. There was, for instance, a memorable trip from Heilly on September 17th, when 391 lying cases were entrained: loading started at 7 p.m. and the train left

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at 11, reaching Amiens the next day at 12.25 p.m. This represented a speed of less than one mile per hour. The Somme and Ancre attacks were sustained until well into the winter, and heavy running was experienced by all the trains. To describe even the most notable trips made by No. 16 would be impossible in the space of this chapter, but a glimpse of one of the difficulties of life during the winter months is afforded us by the following extract from a contemporary account :—

> On December 19th, 1916, we went into repair-garage at Boulogne, and were astonished to find the usually lethargic French workmen at the *Petite Vitesse* roused to great activity. They told us we were to leave in two days, and they, for their part, were ready. The R.E.'s were not. They moved " A " kitchen's stove to the middle of the floor and spent much time in gazing at a new boiler. Failing to fix it by the power of the human eye, they apparently gave up the job, and we went out in the middle of the night to Edgehill, *plus* all their tools. . . . For weeks we were thus bereft of the use of the " A " kitchen's range. Time after time we received movement orders for Boulogne and hoped to achieve our repairs, but time after time we failed to attain our objective. On one occasion we reached the station but failed to consolidate our position; a determined counter-attack driving us as far back as Etaples, whence we retreated once more to Le Hâvre. Finally we started repairs in the depths of the hardest and most persistent frost that most of us can remember. The first day found us at Edgehill, where, in obedience to orders, " B " ward tried to scrub their floor, but merely converted the place into a skating-rink. Pipes froze everywhere, even in the kitchens. The climax was reached when the big " dixie " full of boiling water, taken off the range at night and left with a big fire going, was frozen solid by next morning and, like the porridge left to cook overnight, had to be chipped out of the pot with an axe. Every bolt and screw was capped with hoar frost which did not melt for weeks. Even when loaded the temperature remained well below freezing-point in the wards, especially as the steam pipes froze and defied the best efforts of the French to thaw them out; in which circumstances the personnel naturally had a pleasant time. . . .

During most of February and March, 1917, No. 16 was detailed for evacuation runs from Rouen to Le Hâvre, with a few from Etaples to Le Hâvre as well. It was a monotonous business, and most of the staff were heartily glad when the train was out on its less restricted journeyings again. May was a busy month, for although nine days were spent in repair garage, ten trips were made with a total of 5,002 patients carried; this figure included a total on one trip from Bapaume with no fewer than 824 patients, all sitting except the odd four—for long a record load among the A.T.'s.

Throughout July, 1917, the train was for the most part serving the northern sector of the British front, where preparations were going forward for the great offensive which culminated in the Third Battle of Ypres and later the struggle for the Passchendaele Ridge. There were new loading-places now on what used to be the old " Northern Route," and the train got to know the C.C.S.'s at the new railheads, with their well-known mock-Flemish names, Dosinghem, Mendinghem, and Bandaghem. Save only for a short interval on the Somme towards the end of September, No. 16 could have been seen constantly running on the northern lines of communication till it once more had a brief respite for repairs early in December.

The new year opened fairly quietly, the first evacuation of convalescents from Trouville to Rouen being a landmark towards the end of January, 1918. But with March a new chapter in the train's story opened with the German offensive. It marked the end of the long battles for position, and the start

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of the war of movement. What this meant for the organisation of the lines of communication soon became evident. Certainly the ambulance trains came in for a greater share of uncertainty and danger than they had hitherto known. Here is a short account of No. 16's experiences during the dark days of March, taken from the history published by that train. After describing a visit by the train's personnel to the Unit Headquarters, made while No. 16 lay in the sidings at Bergues, the writer goes on :—

A few days more and we were back with the Third Army, on which front we remained until the storm broke on March 21st, when we left Doullens for Agnez (behind Arras) at 10 p.m. There we loaded up in the dark with guns and shells crashing around us—near enough at least for us to carry down to Etaples one or two patients who had been wounded while we were loading.

As we returned to Doullens next day we found St. Pol being shelled, which was surprising. Why we waited till 10 o'clock to load is not known. At that hour we were a little dismayed to receive patients from Nos. 3 and 29 C.C.S.'s evacuated by car from Grévillers. The whole night was spent in loading from one ambulance and three R.F.C. lorries. No one could give any information about numbers—or rather the information was so contradictory as to be worse than useless. But in the early morning we stopped rather than finished, and wended our way to Etaples once more. We returned at once to Artillery Corner, completing the load at Aubigny. There was an air raid there, and at St. Pol another, which sent us round by Lapugnoy, Lillers and Aire to off-load at Etaples. On March 25th we reached Amiens at 5 p.m. The Battle of the Somme was at its height. We heard the most alarming rumours of the fighting—officers at Frévent were said to have walked there from Edgehill just as the Germans entered, so that for all we knew the Hun was at Corbie and might appear in Amiens at any moment. But as we got through the station we saw some of our future patients, who told us that the battle line was still on the far side of Albert, which was more cheering.

We soon learned that we were loading in the goods-station at once, instead of going further afield. As we were backing down we supplied our usual 100 stretchers and blankets. All round the siding were walking wounded of every description. The large goods-sheds which had been partially cleared were paved with stretchers from end to end. Among these moved Y.M.C.A. men with jugs of water, biscuits, chocolate and nougat : on this unusual fare the patients had apparently been living all day. A few R.A.M.C. men were about, but nothing like an organised bearer-party was possible, and no numbers on which we could rely were given. The train's O.C. and staff-sergeant moved up and down the lines of stretchers chalking numbers on them, while every available man from the train, the few P.B. men on hand, and last but far from least the Y.M.C.A. workers, did the stretcher-bearing. Those who had seen them were reminded of the sheds at Dunkirk in 1914, when the Unit first landed.

The outstanding feature of the loading, where all did well, was the heroic way in which the Y.M.C.A. helped us. Without them we should really never have been loaded before midnight. . . . The lights were turned on in the shed and immediately " Archie " lifted up his voice, and fragments began to fall upon the roof. The last stretchers were loaded at about the time the first bombs fell, and the sitters were packed into every odd corner that was left. Like Sir Richard Grenville we " brought them all aboard," and very glad they were.

The next business was to get away from this unhealthy neighbourhood as quickly as possible. Our driver, stoker, and guards were missing : so was the R.T.O. Before they could be found, a couple of terrific explosions, followed by the crash of falling glass, announced the arrival of two bombs opposite " H " kitchen. They fell in a shed, which took off some of their force, but the whole side of the coach was wrecked. By a piece of singular good fortune no one was killed. The mess-room in the coach was crammed with patients and every part of the train filled up, but the only casualties were two of the orderlies.

But the blazing shed made an excellent target, and it was imperative to get the train away. A search-party unearthed the driver from a cellar and got him to pull us up a couple of hundred yards. Hardly had we moved when three more bombs fell in the place we had just left. After a little more delay, feeling we might be overlooked where we were, the authorities took us across to the engine dépôt, where they left us for some hours, while Fritz after Fritz came across and (in the French phrase) " watered " the place with bombs and machine-gun bullets. At last, about 2 o'clock, we left for Wimereux, having sustained five hours' bombardment and brought away our seven hundred patients uninjured. How we escaped so easily we have never been able to understand, as we were to all intents and purposes the target itself. . . .

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Throughout April and May, 1918, there were many heavy trips, and some of them not devoid of excitement: Chocques corner, Aire, Doullens, Frévent, Abbeville—none of these were so tranquil as in earlier days. But luck was with No. 16 until June 1st, when the train, after an unpleasant aerial bombardment at Abbeville the night before, came into Etaples just in time for a heavy raid. Hardly had it arrived at the new siding there, when one of the bombs fell right on "A" coach, which instantly took fire. Fortunately the driver and stoker, with admirable courage, remained at their posts, and it was possible to isolate the blazing coach before the flames spread. But "A" was a complete wreck when at last the fire was extinguished, and the bomb had blown the back bogey to pieces. One of the medical officers was actually in "A" kitchen when the bomb fell, but miraculously escaped without serious injury, as also did four orderlies only a few yards away in "B" ward. But in spite of the destruction of one kitchen and the stores, the train accomplished two more trips on the two following days before putting in for much-needed repairs at Audruicq. There it remained for about a month, a period of welcome rest and varied recreations. But during these weeks the staff lost their staff-sergeant, Hal Simpson, who was obliged to leave through continued ill-health, his place being taken by W. Farley Rutter, who had hitherto filled the same post on No. 17 Ambulance Train.

The train emerged from the workshops of Audruicq in time for the strenuous journeys involved by the great Allied offensives of July and August. The first part of July was spent in the north again, but towards the end of the month there were runs from Senlis and Villers-Cotterets back to Rouen. August was the train's busiest month, with eighteen separate trips, during which 7,966 patients (5,899 wounded) were carried, although one week was spent standing empty in garage at Crouy. And September was hardly less busy with seventeen trips made and over 7,000 patients carried. The heavy casualties during the advances and the disorganised conditions on the lines of communication made this final period of the train's history one of heavy strain. Here are some glimpses of the last fortnight before the Armistice:—

After unloading at Etaples, we had an order for Cambrai itself, and were given numerous cases of ether for the Advanced Base Medical Dépôt. We got as far as Chaulnes, where we stayed for some hours. (It was here that a French Canadian in a control-box told our driver: "Qu'on serait mieux avec des Boches." The effect upon our engine crew was electric. The driver shed tears of rage over the insult, and torrents of French were poured out, to which the Canadian replied with equal volubility. Apparently both sides rang up a higher authority, but the dispute remained unsettled when we left). The delay was caused by a mine explosion at Roisel, and we returned to Longueau, to attempt the position from another direction. To our chagrin, we went straight through Achiet and on to Boisleux once more. Our orders were now for Marquion, while No. 26 was to go to Cantimpré. In vain we pleaded our cases of ether; "Traffics" was obdurate, and to Marquion we went. Here we found No. 30 loading up. We were told that we should load at 8 o'clock. At 10 o'clock No. 30 pulled out, and we took her place. There was no one about to load us, but "Traffics" insisted that we were due at midnight. After much prolonged enquiry we went to bed and slept undisturbed; nor did we load the next day, but stayed blocking a valuable line. On the second morning we started to load, and broke all records by loading semi-continuously from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Many of our patients came from Cambrai, and reached us in a very bad condition, with the unfortunate result that three of them died before we had finished loading.

Feeling that some variety was needed, we went north again and were the first train to load from Lille, the suburban station of St. André being the exact place. When we settled down in the loading-

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siding, the R.T.O. congratulated himself that we had not been blown up, as we were the first train to use that line, and three mines had gone up the day before.

We travelled down at a tremendous speed, off-loaded, and soon were back at St. Omer. Dadizeelhoek was our destination, and we had a most interesting trip. After loading we went on to Roulers, and out again over Passchendaele, past the Lille gate at Ypres, and down to Brielen. Passchendaele was a scene of almost greater desolation than the Ancre Valley—words can go no further. At Brielen Chinese S.B.'s loaded us from several directions in pitch darkness with an unspecified number of non-infectious, ordinary influenza, and broncho-pneumonia patients. After some hours of this entertainment, we went on to Rémy, arriving at dead of night. Here the situation was somewhat relieved by our cheery friend the R.S.M., who gave us the number of 'flu cases we were getting, thus materially lightening our labours. So at least we hoped, but almost before we had finished thanking him, we found that the figures supplied were totally incorrect!

We off-loaded these patients at Terlingthun, and found orders for Cambrai awaiting us. Accordingly we breakfasted next morning at Marcoing, and after pushing on as far as Rumilly, we garaged beside No. 7, which promptly cleared out, her place being taken by No. 1. The weather was positively filthy—a high wind and deluges of rain. At mid-day No. 1 left us and we saw we were in for a night loading. In this we were not mistaken. Our orders were for Caudry, but our driver, who did not know the road and was not given a pilot, refused to try it in the dark, and we found ourselves about 23.00 hours at Awoingt.

Here a pleasant R.A.M.C. private (late of No. 7) told us we were loading at once. He himself, we understood, was the clerk of the S.M.O., but as the E.M.O.'s clerk was sick, he was doing his job as well. He also kept in touch with the R.T.O. and was responsible for detailing M.A.C.'s to all the Third Army C.C.S.'s. With him the O.C. arranged figures, and over a cup of tea he told us many interesting stories, to the sound of the rain beating upon the roof. About 1 a.m. a draggled S.B. told the O.C. that the sergeant at the C.C.S. wanted to know if the train was ready to load! It really was too much. The O.C. hailed our friend the clerk, and told him to tell the E.M.O. or the S.M.O. or anyone else he liked, that the O.C. Train thought it better for all concerned to wait till daylight. To which came the reply, that the E.M.O. was in bed, that the S.M.O. was also in bed, and that the D.M.S. had just sent a message to say we were to load at once and leave at 2 a.m. Remark overheard in the darkness above the rattling of the rain: "It's all very well for the D.M.S., I expect he's in bed like everyone else, with a glass of toddy perhaps. *He* can't see what it's like out here."

However, we began to load. The loading-siding was muddy and full of holes; the train was on an embankment, which meant that each stretcher had to be lifted shoulder-high at least; the night was black as pitch, and the rain tropical in its violence. Germans began to arrive all unadvised, and when figures for them were obtained, they were exceeded by 100 per cent. To increase our sorrows, several of them were moribund and had to be detrained. The cases were very bad, and it was only with the greatest difficulty that the sitting-wards were filled. Stretcher-bearers are a long-suffering race, but these had been on duty for twenty-four hours in the worst conditions, and though they did their best, the wan dawn was breaking before we completed this tragic load.

Slowly we journeyed down, with long halts at short intervals, until we reached Achiet, from which place we did rather better. At St. Pol we were told an Armistice had been signed, and were inclined to believe it, particularly as we saw in a French paper, that delegates were on their way to Marshal Foch. At Etaples the same news greeted us, and the general air of optimism abroad reconciled us to a long wait for cars, and almost to the inevitable Calais load. The first cars for this arrived with patients at least three-quarters of an hour before we had finished off-loading, and confusion was rife. At Calais the Armistice was in doubt, and our spirits gradually sank under the influence of Vendroux, which delightful place we left for Fort Rouge. The next morning saw us sailing through the suburbs of Lille and on to Ascq, where we were once more the first train up. Our most remarkable patient was a man who said he was a straggler from Mons, and had lived for four years in a cellar in Lille. Not unnaturally his mind had given way under the strain. . . . He travelled down with a Hindoo with melancholia, a man under arrest, and two Chinamen—a record for one compartment.

We off-loaded at Terlingthun, and went off to Don, arriving there on the morning of the 11th. As we were loading up, an aeroplane circled over the C.C.S. and dropped a message that hostilities would cease at 11.00 hrs. At last the war was over! We had used the words in jest so often that they seemed almost meaningless to us, and after our busy week we could feel hardly anything but fatigue. We finished loading somehow, and set off for Lillers. On our way we saw huge coloured posters in Béthune station confirming the news.

At Lillers we took on a load exclusively of Portuguese, and for the first time, they ran the whole show themselves. . . . Well! we got loaded at last, but by that time we had lost what little enthusiasm we had had before, and by the time we reached Terlingthun we were positively

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morose. At the best of times none too sober a place, Terlingthun was Bacchanalian that night, and it was a wonder we ever got rid of our patients. We finished at last and went to bed tired out.

That was how we heard the news that our labours were at an end. Were they? We sometimes wondered if the whole thing were not a hoax. . . .

Not without reason: for, as in the case of the other trains also, work went on with scarcely diminished pressure for some time after the fighting had ceased. The flow of sick was considerable, perhaps greater than usual through the prevalence of influenza and the trying circumstances of the advance towards the Rhine. But there were consolations in the novelty of some of the routes traversed: a long trip to Pontarlier, on the Swiss frontier, to bring back repatriated prisoners took No. 16 into unexplored regions, and the Côte d'Or and the Juras were a welcome change from the dreary flats of the Nord. Christmas Day was spent travelling empty from Sotteville to St. Germain-au-Mont d'Or, just north of Lyons, this being another trip for returning prisoners of war. In January, 1919, the train made two journeys up into the occupied portion of Germany, and the staff had the opportunity of paying short visits to Aix-la-Chapelle, Bonn, and Cologne. After the second of these long journeys came the crew's last trip, an evacuation from Etaples to Calais, and they left their train at the Tintelleries station, Boulogne, on January 30th, 1919. When the familiar white figures "16" disappeared into the tunnel there, they knew that their three-and-a-half years' service was over, and if there were some sentimental regrets they were perhaps counterbalanced by the prospect of speedy demobilisation.

Fuller details are given elsewhere* of the work of No. 16 train; let it suffice here to record that the total number of patients carried since August, 1915, was 158,579.

No. 17 Ambulance Train.

No. 17 Ambulance Train was the second of the British Red Cross Society's trains to be taken over by members of the Unit. Like its sister-train No. 16, it was a "khaki train" composed of English rolling-stock, and if its Great Eastern coaches had not the shine and finish of No. 16's Great Western stock, it was none the less as well arranged and fully equipped as any train then on the line. The members who were to form its crew were trained together at the Jordans Camp during November, 1915. For the most part they were new members of the Unit, but included several who had transferred from the Friends' War Victims Relief work, and two members who had already had experience of ambulance train work on No. 16. One of these was Harold Watts, the leader of No. 16's staff, who now took charge of the new staff of No. 17 when they crossed to Boulogne on November 28th, 1915.

Arrived at that base they were instructed to await the return of No. 17 there, as it was meanwhile "on the move" and to try to overtake it would hardly have been practicable for a body of forty-seven men. The few days of

*See Appendix "A."

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waiting were spent pleasantly at Boulogne, and when the train arrived at the Gare Centrale the new staff boarded it there on December 2nd. Work started three days later when the first load was carried from Etaples to Calais—an easy enough beginning. It continued with a sequence of runs on the " Northern Route," the features of which we have already described earlier in this chapter, continuing till the middle of January, 1916. After this the crew were introduced to the rather more varied runs of the " Southern Route," which included loading-places at Doullens, Corbie, Gézaincourt, and Longpré. Towards the end of January an outbreak of illness among the staff brought a wearisome fortnight of quarantine in the dismal surroundings of Sotteville, varied only by unsuccessful attempts to discover a typhoid " carrier " on board and by very successful cleaning and disinfection of the whole train. Otherwise only a few incidents and changes stand out until the new chapter of the war opened with the Somme battles. There was, for instance, a memorable off-loading at Calais when a load of about 200 patients was transferred to a waiting hospital ship in twenty minutes. There was a ten days' period of repairs at the *Petite Vitesse* workshops at Boulogne, with strenuous efforts to improve the outward appearance of the coachwork which resulted only in the removal of most of the paint! And towards the middle of April Harold Watts returned to the Unit's Headquarters, his place being filled by W. Farley Rutter, who remained in charge of the staff until transferred to No. 16 Train in July, 1918, when he was succeeded by Howard Smith. As the British front extended during the summer months of 1916, new garages and new loading-places were added to the train's itinerary, Aubigny, Longueau, Barlin, Bruay, Puchevillers, Romescamps and Warlincourt, among others.

During the momentous July of 1916, No. 17 did not go through such strenuous experiences as the other two Unit trains then running, although her totals that month were certainly higher than any previous figures had been. On the morning after the offensive opened, there was a heavy load of nearly 500 patients carried down to Le Hâvre, the journey taking thirty hours. But after two more runs the train had to put into Boulogne for repairs, where it remained for a week. The rest of July and the greater part of August were occupied in serving the familiar loading-places on the " Northern Route," and on August 24th the train was again garaged for repairs and re-painting.

September, however, was a busy month, starting with the heavy casualties incurred in the capture of Guillemont on the 3rd, when 581 cases were loaded at Heilly, a new port of call which was later to become well known to all the trains. Other new loading-places served for the first time during the next few weeks were Contay, Grovetown and Edgehill, all lying in the desolate rolling country of the Somme. Right on till the end of the year No. 17 was evacuating steadily from these Somme clearing stations with only a few variations of route. As winter came on the aspect of these places became more and more forlorn, and garage life on these wind-swept and comfortless ridges was apt to be depressing in the extreme. There are few incidents to record of the work at this time,

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but a few extracts from a train diary show that it was not without its minor episodes :—

October 15th. Another load from Gézaincourt this evening : the usual run to Boulogne, following the recent custom.

October 16th. Repairs again. The mess-room is to be re-painted, so meals will have to be taken in the bunks.

October 24th. Leave to England (or to U.K. as official parlance has it) has been opened again. Six of our men have gone off amid general rejoicing—not so much for their own sakes as for the principle involved. . . .

October 25th. We are carrying down German prisoner patients from Boulogne to Le Hâvre : guards are placed at the ends of the corridors.

October 31st. A smash on the line near Doullens station ; a volunteer party is out working to clear the line.

November 4th. First visit to Varennes (*later :* and last). Artillery duels going forward on the Thiepval ridge. We saw tanks and dummy tanks for the first time.

November 9th. An air raid occurred at Amiens while we were lying just outside the station to-day. The drivers left the engine for the nearest shelter. We had another at Longueau the night before last and falling shrapnel pierced the roof of " N " coach.

November 17th. Bombs dropped round Edgehill, but no 'planes visible. Wretchedly cold and wet weather, and this is bringing us heavy loads of " trench feet " cases from Contay and Corbie.

Christmas found No. 17 running up to the Contay railhead, and the celebrations had to be postponed till the train was at rest at that delectable spot the next day. With the new year began a long period of running in the northern district again, and the great frost of the opening weeks of 1917 did not spare No. 17 more than the other trains : it was a time looked back to without regrets. From January 29th till March 3rd the train was engaged on a series of trips from Lapugnoy and the neighbouring stations of Lillers, Chocques, Béthune, Barlin and Bruay, carrying a majority of sick cases. A time-table of one of these slow and monotonous trips reads thus :—

March 1st.	7 a.m.	Load at Lapugnoy.
	1 p.m.	„ „ Lillers.
	7.45 p.m.	„ „ Barlin.
March 2nd.	6.15 a.m.	Off-load at Etaples.

—which serves to show that even behind quiet sectors there were worries. But a fortnight in repair garage at Boulogne during March, where the train was visited by the Chairman of the Unit, was opportune, for it gave a breathing space before a busy period which opened on March 22nd, with a trip to Cerisy-Gailly. With the Arras offensive of April came some heavy loads of wounded from Agnez and Aubigny, and the train was working at high pressure right on to the middle of May. Thus between April 2nd and May 17th, there were twenty-two trips made and a total of 8,544 patients carried. During this busy period the staff suffered a heavy loss by the sudden death of William Kenneth Smith, one of their original number, who died of illness in hospital at St. Omer on May 2nd, only a few hours after being sent off the train.

Until the middle of June the train was for the most part working on the southern lines, but after that there came a long spell on the northern. When

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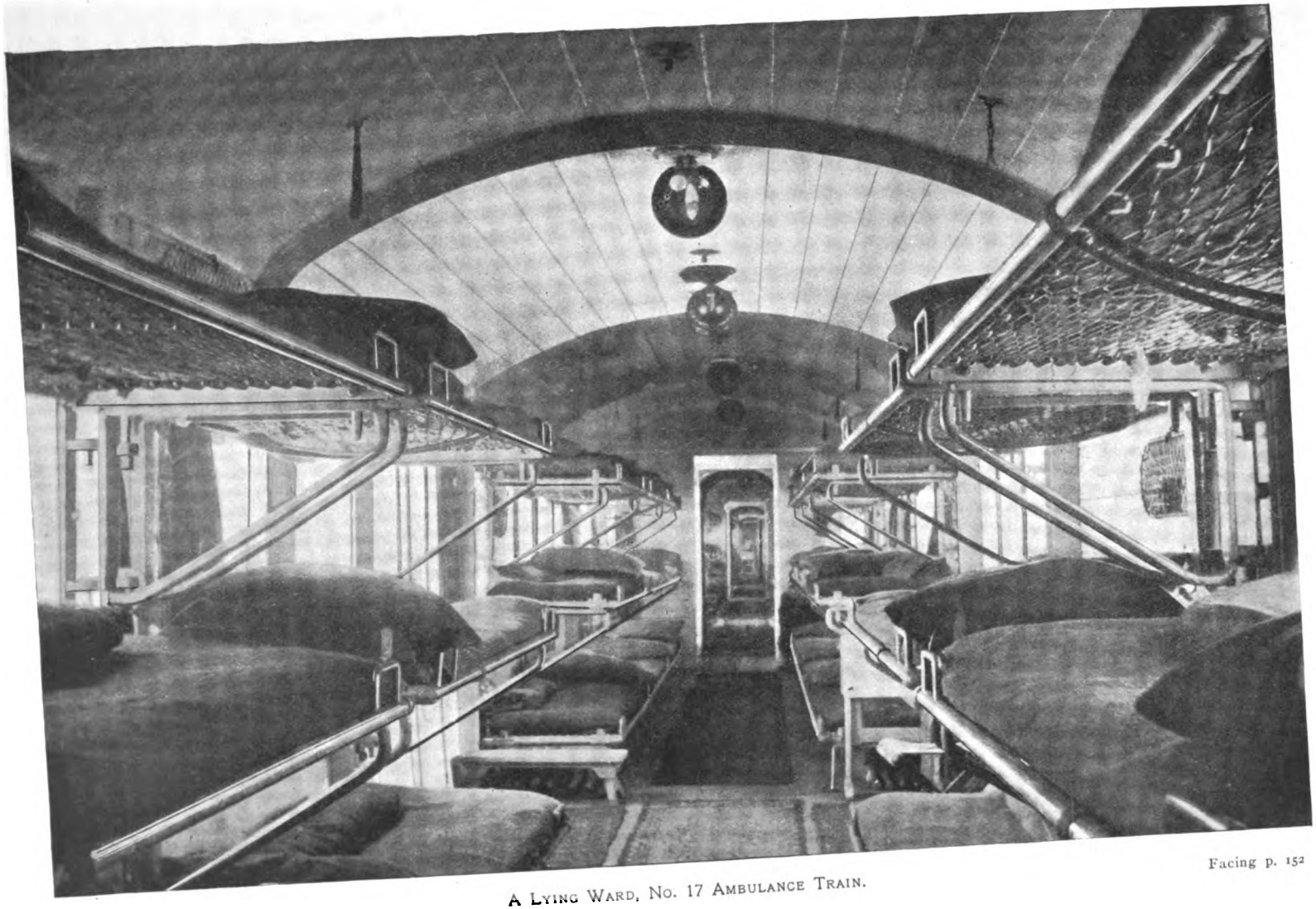

A Lying Ward, No. 17 Ambulance Train.

Facing p. 152

Plate XXII

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the great offensive in Flanders opened on July 31st there was, of course, plenty of work for the trains, and August was a month of heavy loads and a high proportion of bad cases. Most trips during the month were from the clearing stations behind the Ypres salient, Rémy, Godewaersvelde, Dosinghem, Bandaghem, and others. The train journal has some entries of interest about this time :—

August 1st. Yesterday's offensive in a downpour of rain has already filled the C.C.S.'s with wounded. We loaded to-day at Dosinghem for the first time with 394—all wounded except 3, and 291 of them stretcher-cases.

August 2nd-5th. Three heavy loads from Rémy : a daily round loading at 1 a.m., Rémy to Boulogne, back to Strazeele and so round to Rémy again.

August 16th. When *en route* from Blendecques to Rémy we were held up at Borre from 9 to 11 p.m., with lights out and aircraft overhead—but nothing happened. Loaded up 700 sitting-cases at Rémy at 2 a.m.

August 18th. The train was photographed by the Canadian War Records photographer, at Bruay to-day.

August 22nd. A night load from Rémy, mostly badly wounded, and many were put on still under anæsthetics. We had just finished loading when an air raid started ; 'plane picked up by searchlights, hit and brought down in flames. No lights allowed on train from 9 p.m. till 3.30 a.m.

September 13th. A run from Boulogne to Trouville, our first visit there.

September 20th. Southern loading-places after a long interval, but new ones—Boisleux-au-Mont and Achiet-le-Grand. Carried our first American patients.

September 22nd. North again. A load from Mendinghem, almost all wounded.

Then came a week for repairs at Boulogne, marked by a succession of air raids on that town, and work started again and continued steadily right on to the end of 1917. The end of November saw the heavy attacks and counter-attacks at Cambrai, and casualties were severe.

November 19th. A splendidly inconsequential run : we set off from Abbeville for Aveluy; *en route* orders were changed to Achiet-le-Grand : but in the end we were taken to Grévillers !

November 30th. Germans shelled the road near Grévillers siding where we were lying. We started to load unexpectedly just when all lights had to be put out by order. Casualties from the Germans' counter-attack at Cambrai coming in fast.

December 2nd. The second anniversary of our taking over No. 17 Train, spent in traversing the old Somme battlefields, and taking on a load of the worst gas cases we have known from Ytres.

December 12th. At Rouen ; our first visit to a town for six weeks.

The first few weeks of the new year were spent mainly in runs from northern railheads, but on January 22nd the train was put into the R.O.D. workshops at Audruicq for a thorough overhaul. This lasted until February 24th, when the train emerged re-painted and repaired in many parts of its structure. The personnel meanwhile had been living in a group of huts in that mushroom city, designated for the nonce by such titles as " Highbrow Hut," " The Old Curiosity Shop," and " Devonshire House." Their time was enlivened by the recurrence of that venerable rumour of A.T. life, that the train was to be sent forthwith to Italy, by a number of air raid alarms, and by the more exotic interest of the New Year festivities of the Chinese Labour Corps. But otherwise there was little to record till the German offensive of March marked the resumption of

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moving warfare. Some of the train's experiences during the March retreat were well worthy of record, and we quote from an account by one of the train's staff :—

After coming out of the repair sheds at Audruicq we had some runs on the old familiar lines of the north, from Rémy, Steenwerck, Bailleul, to Etaples and Wimereux. But there was little out of the ordinary to note during the first part of March. We did not remain long in the north, however, and were sent south to serve the Fifth Army's clearing stations. It was at Tincourt on the 21st that we first knew that things were on the move—unmistakably on the move, too. The C.C.S. had received orders to retire, and while we were loading their cases German shells were falling ceaselessly in and about the village, a quarter of a mile to the east of the loading-siding. It was an uncanny morning, and not readily to be forgotten. A thick mist lay all over the countryside, and one could barely distinguish the familiar landmarks; all was vague and uncertain, save for the very definite whistle and crash of the incoming shells. A number burst within a short distance of the train, and the German gunners were evidently increasing their range, but they did not quite reach the C.C.S. till after the train had left. Rumour was rife, and for once alarmist reports proved to be only too reliable. No. 17 was the last train to load at Tincourt; we left with over 280 lying cases on board, after an anxious morning, and came down to Rouen.

Next day we came up the line again under orders for Ham. But on arriving at Nesle we were stopped and backed into a siding. Here a scene of wild confusion met our eyes, and left no doubt that the state of affairs was serious in the extreme. The station, such as it was, swarmed with a tragic throng of civilian folk, escaping with all the goods they could manage to carry : a piteous sight, bringing home to us, more forcibly perhaps than ever before, the meaning of war to the inhabitants of an invaded region, and doubly piteous when one remembered that this was now the second time these poor creatures had been driven from hearth and home, leaving their fields to be wasted and their goods to the mercy of invaders.

Down the railway track from the direction of Ham came a long line of wounded British soldiers, wearily dragging themselves along, many of them utterly exhausted when they reached the train. They had tramped all the way from Ham (about four miles away), which was being heavily shelled, having been told to follow the westward railway line till they came upon the ambulance train. About dusk No. 6 A.T. came down from Ham fully loaded, and its staff gave a graphic description of their loading under heavy fire : some of their windows were broken and one of their men had been wounded. But, although at one time they had thought there was no chance of getting away from Ham, from which the railway authorities had already retired, they had come through the ordeal successfully.

Later in the evening—it was an anxious period of waiting—our orders to proceed to Ham were cancelled and our destination was changed to Marchelepôt, further back on the Chaulnes-Péronne line. What then was our surprise when about 8.30 that night we found ourselves moving forward towards Ham. But the shelling had ceased for the moment, and all was quiet when suddenly the train drew up in a shallow cutting just across a level-crossing, only a short distance from Ham station. A French sentry on duty at the gates had held up the train, refusing to allow us to proceed further as it was uncertain whether the line was intact, and in any case the station had been abandoned. Alongside us here was a light engine and van with French soldiers on board, and a squad of French *Génie* was stationed at the bridges, awaiting the order to blow them up. Our guard obtained a promise from the French on the engine to find out for us whether the line was clear for our return, and to come back to inform us. They steamed off westwards accordingly, but we never heard anything of them again.

The O.C. of the train realised our rather perilous position, and did his best to persuade our French guards to let the train proceed back to Nesle. This they were unwilling to do on two grounds: firstly, because there was only a single line between us and Nesle, the second track having already been destroyed at one point by shell-fire; secondly, because the engine was at the wrong end of the train and there was no means of getting it to the other at this place; and so they obstinately refused to move the train until they were informed that the line was clear.

We waited and waited, but no news came. There were no longer any signalmen at the signal-posts. The night was wearing slowly on, and we were anxious, for the shelling might re-open at any moment and perhaps destroy the second set of metals to our rear, in which case we should have been hopelessly cut off. At last the guard himself wandered off down the line in the darkness, and after some time returned in the company of a compatriot who seemed none too sober. He announced that he had instructions to return to Nesle. Whether he had or not mattered little to us, so long as we got the train away from this awkward position. We moved very cautiously down until nearing the exposed stretch of line previously shelled, and then the driver put on full

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steam to get safely across before we should be noticed. Luckily he succeeded, but we learned afterwards that we had only got away from Ham about a couple of hours before the Germans had completely surrounded it.

We continued our journey to Marchelepôt, where we found the C.C.S. inundated with casualties, loading up one train after another in an attempt to keep pace with the influx of cases. It was the first time we had loaded there, and the last. We ran with our heavy load down to Rouen, and returned at once to Edgehill, near Albert, on Sunday, the 24th. There we found No. 12 and a Temporary Ambulance Train already waiting. A large stretch of ground just beside us was occupied by the medical and dental equipment of clearing stations, dumped there and left in the charge of a few orderlies; the sight suggested that all was far from well with the medical services of the Fifth Army at that moment.

It was hard to find out what was happening just at first, but it soon became clear—only too clear—that the Germans were advancing rapidly, and were no great distance away by now. There could be no doubt that a " crisis load " was in store for us. No. 12 started to load some time before us, but orders soon came for us as well, and we started loading about 6.30 p.m. before they had finished. Our instructions were to take as many stretcher-cases as possible and fill up any odd corners left over with sitting patients. The C.C.S. had orders to clear all their patients if possible on to these trains and then to retire at once on Doullens. The cases loaded were extraordinarily bad, many of them quite unfit to travel. But the circumstances were desperate, and any cases who could not be got on to the train would either have to be left to the mercy of the advancing Germans, or taken a long trip to Doullens by car, a journey even more exhausting than that by train. Stretchers were loaded into both lying- and sitting-wards, and on the floors of the dispensary coach, while a number of walking wounded were accommodated in the personnel mess-room and the senior N.C.O.'s bunk. Such was our last loading at Edgehill, finishing with 503 cases on board.

It was now getting late, and there was no sign of our leaving the siding. The roads were thronged with retreating troops and refugee civilians. Hundreds of Chinese and Indian labour troops were passing, footsore and weary. A squadron of British cavalry retreating also came by, with the news that the enemy were already in Bray-sur-Somme. Our position was not enviable. The O.C. of the train did his best to hasten matters by repeated appeals to the railway authorities, both British and French; but nothing happened. True, we had no orders where to go with our load, and could not send advice to anyone to be on the look-out for us; but we simply had to get down the line. No. 12 and the T.A.T. were moved away in turn, but No. 17 still lay in the siding with her 500 patients, who were growing restive with the delay. In times like these everyone felt that the great thing was to be moving. Then word came through that the French could supply no suitable engine for our train: cheerful news indeed, now that the German 'planes were getting busy with bombs round about. But at last the British R.O.D. sent up a small goods-engine. Poor thing! it did its best, but it could not pull us out unaided, and a second had to be sent for before at last we moved out shortly before 11 o'clock that night.

We did not get far, however, before we found that the whole railway line was blocked with a solid line of trains stretching down to Amiens. There followed a heartrending time for all on board. Never had we had worse cases in our charge, and never had the congestion of a " crisis load " made things more difficult. Shortly after loading had been completed men began to die here and there on the train, and many more deaths seemed inevitable. When daylight came we had reached Heilly, three or four miles from Edgehill, and here we stuck with scarcely a few hundred yards' progress till about mid-day. All the while death was busy up and down the whole length of the train, though doctors, sisters and orderlies were one and all doing everything possible to save as many lives as they could. In the early afternoon the senior N.C.O. was sent down the line to Corbie on foot with a note from the O.C. to the R.T.O., pointing out how serious was our plight and asking him to expedite our progress if humanly possible. The R.T.O. was most sympathetic, but explained that the line had been damaged by German bombs at Amiens and so all traffic was held up to the east of the city; he feared that little could be done.

About 5.30 on the Monday afternoon we reached Corbie, but could get no news as to our destination. We ran on a few miles, but once more found ourselves in the traffic block. The whole night was spent near Lamotte-Brebière—a night that was unforgettable for its unceasing struggle with death. It seemed a hopeless task, and the strain was beginning to tell on all, patients no less than the staff. By 4 o'clock on the Tuesday morning no fewer than 21 men had died on board. We had no place to put the corpses, which simply had to lie in the wards where they were. . . .

Our position was becoming intolerable; patients were growing worse, food supplies were running down, and no one knew at what moment we might find ourselves cut off by the Germans. The quartermaster-sergeant was despatched to make his way as best he could to Amiens, there to urge on the authorities concerned that some means should be found of detraining the corpses,

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putting off about twenty of the worst cases, and obtaining further supplies of food. A letter from the O.C. of the train, with the additional details supplied by the Q.M.S., was successful, and arrangements were made for detraining the bodies and picking up fresh stores at Amiens. But the medical authorities sent word that no cases must be put off the train there as there was no accommodation for them. The train moved on, and we came into Amiens on the Tuesday morning—forty hours after leaving Edgehill, less than twenty kilometres away. There at last we carried out the bodies of twenty-three men who died during that journey.

The rest of the trip down to Rouen was comparatively straightforward, although two more patients died on the way, and it was 7.20 in the evening before the last stretchers were carried across the platform to the ambulances.

There followed a series of three heavy loads from Amiens and Namps, where the C.C.S.'s of the Fifth Army had assembled, loads which, with the dislocation of the normal medical services, were really of exceptional severity, but after the two terrible days and nights of strain and agony and stench that had gone before, hardly stood out so sharply as otherwise they might have done. But scarcely was this first rush over, when No. 17 came in for another. The German offensive in the north gave the train a busy time, and during the advance in the Lys valley there was a memorable loading at Steenbecque, which lasted overnight for eleven hours, cases being brought by car all the way from Merville and St. Venant. During the subsequent advance towards the sea, several of the trains' familiar garages on the northern routes were overrun and left desolate, Bailleul, Merville, Strazeele, and others. Blendecques became a busy railhead, and on one occasion No. 17 lay there alongside Marshal Foch's train. Work went on busily right through April and May; for the most part in the north, a period marked by the vigorous bombing of railway sidings by hostile aircraft, with many unpleasant experiences for ambulance trains. One member of the crew, who had been admitted to hospital at Etaples, was wounded in the second of the great air-raids on that hospital centre; the train itself sustained some damage from bomb fragments, and was indeed lucky not to have been more seriously damaged by one bomb which fell in a shallow ditch only some twenty yards away. The whole of this summer, in addition to the very heavy running from front to base, was made particularly strenuous by the disturbance of these repeated air attacks. The crews of trains had orders to sleep away from the garage at many places, and this was not always a pleasant business. While sleeping out at Ligny St. Flochel in August, three of the train's personnel, and a number of other men, were wounded, one of them severely.

From August right on till the end of hostilities, No. 17 was extremely busy; save for a ten days' pause for repairs at Audruicq in September, she was almost continuously on the move, with heavy loads and long journeys. The sequence of attacks all along the British front left no breathing space, but October proved to be the record month, during which twenty-four trips were made and 8,162 patients carried, over 5,000 of these being wounded. The first days of November were hardly less busy, but the Armistice found the train at Le Hâvre, having brought down a load for the hospital ship from Le Tréport. Moving back to Abbeville that day, the staff could catch glimpses of festivities in the hundred familiar villages beside the railway. After two more trips the train took its share in the repatriation of prisoners of war, collecting a load of over 600 men at Nancy, a similar trip being made a fortnight later to Dôle.

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On December 14th, No. 17 made its first trip up into Germany, passing by Namur and Liège to garage at Herbesthal, and was thus the first of the Unit's trains to cross the frontier. From Euskirchen and Düren a load was brought to Terlingthun, near Boulogne, and the train returned to load at Namur and Charleroi. The chief features of the train's last full month of work were two more journeys to Germany, on one of which the personnel was able to visit Cologne itself. But the very last trip was marked by an accident. After loading at Huy and Namur on January 29th, the train was stopped for a signal just outside Charleroi, and was run into from behind by the " Boulogne-Cologne Express," formerly No. 28 A.T. The guards' living-van was driven through " T " coach, but happily there were no casualties more serious than a severe shaking and some bruises. After salving as much of the stores as possible, the train continued its journey without " T " coach, taking on a further batch of patients at Marchiennes-au-Pont—No. 17's last loading-place.

On February 2nd the personnel was disbanded at Abbeville. The office records up to that date showed that from the beginning of December, 1915, 375 trips had been made and a total of 129,517 patients carried. These figures represented an achievement no less solid than that of the other trains, but the crew had a special pride in recalling that on December 10th an order had been issued with the approval of the A.D.M.S., A.T., placing No. 17 Train first on " the list of A.T.'s in the B.E.F. for all-round merit."

No. 11 Ambulance Train.

Like those of Nos. 16 and 17, the crew of No. 11 Ambulance Train had the advantage of being trained together in England for their work and of arriving on the scene as a body. But unlike the others, they had to undergo a long interval of waiting before their work actually began, for when they reached their train on January 25th, 1916, they found it lying at the Sotteville garage, near Rouen, temporarily out of commission. The number of trains on the line was more than enough for the needs of the service during this, the quietest winter of the war, and in consequence No. 11 had for the time been removed from the active list.

It was one of the early types of ambulance trains composed of twenty-one assorted waggons and coaches of the French " Etat " line, and as such presented many disadvantageous points of comparison with the two Unit trains which preceded it. Only four of the coaches were connected by corridors, which meant that communication during runs had to be made either during casual stops or by agile climbing along the footboards. But experience soon showed that these and other difficulties were not insuperable, and it should not be forgotten how much the train owed in its early days to the leadership and instruction of its Commanding Officer, and of A. W. Clemes, its senior N.C.O., who was transferred to the train from No. 16. During the six weeks in which No. 11 remained garaged at Sotteville, the practising of loading and off-loading was a feature which proved of value when work actually began, and a party of twelve

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men detached for temporary duty at No. 12 General Hospital, near Rouen, gained some no less valuable experience of orderlies' work with patients.

At last, on March 9th, the train left the sidings at Sotteville, and a few days later the new crew made their first trip with patients from Corbie to Rouen. Once started, running was fairly regular, though these first weeks on the line were not very strenuous. Trips down to Etretat and Le Tréport, and from the clearing stations behind Béthune and Armentières, were their chief features. But in May the first battle of the Vimy Ridge resulted in the train's first spell of heavy work, and gave the staff some foretaste of what was to follow that summer. It was followed by a period of garage again at Sotteville and in June there were very few trips made with patients.

On July 1st, however, the great Battle of the Somme opened. The previous night the train had been moved up to Romescamps, a large railroad centre near Amiens, and the intensity of the bombardment going on along the Somme front that night left no doubt that great events were going forward. During the next forty-eight hours, three trips were made to the front, and unforgettable trips they were to all who took part in them. The sight of the clearing station at Gézaincourt, near Doullens, on the morning of July 2nd was not one that could easily fade from the memory. Loads carried during that period of stress were double the normal complement : wherever a man could possibly be placed he had to be fitted in. After several Somme journeys the train was transferred to a quieter part of the front, but this brought no respite from the strain of constant running, for on the stationary sectors one train had now to perform the evacuations usually carried out by several trains. Eleven journeys were accomplished in as many days, and by August 18th the train had carried six thousand patients since the " push " began. But the staff had the encouragement of knowing that their work had been done to the satisfaction of the authorities concerned, when they were specially congratulated by the A.D.M.S., A.T., on a visit to the train at Abbeville. And they had the additional satisfaction of a few days' rest at the secluded station of Bentin, in the Canche valley. Before the month was out, however, No. 11 was once more on the move, running regularly to the area of Gézaincourt, Vecquemont, and Corbie, and later to Edgehill and Grovetown. Right through the autumn months these runs continued steadily, until a series of journeys between Rouen and Le Hâvre with convalescents for the hospital ships for England made a break. These lasted almost daily till after Christmas.

The frosty weather of the new year's opening weeks was no less hard on No. 11 train than on the rest. Beyond the fire of the kitchen, heating was non-existent, and the difficulties with water hardly need description. For the most part the familiar regions of the Somme, behind the Fourth Army front, were being served, and no new ground was touched till early in April, when No. 11 was the first A.T. to visit the C.C.S. at Grévillers near Bapaume, a district recently evacuated by the Germans in their March withdrawal. During the next month the train was working in the district round Béthune, and it was about this time that, to everyone's regret, Staff-Sergeant Clemes left the

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train to join the A.I.F., being replaced by Donald Collier from No. 5 Train. Shortly afterwards came a busy time with the Second Army's attack on the Messines Ridge, runs memorable for a fortunate escape from shelling at Bailleul station, and for the large number of German patients carried down after that battle. Just before the great battles in Flanders opened at the end of July, the train was moved south again, this time to the new British fronts beyond Albert and Péronne. This was its first experience of some places, such as Ytres and Tincourt, later to become very familiar to the crew. During September extensive repairs and repainting were carried out in the workshops at Sotteville, and there was not much to record till the surprise attack at Cambrai brought some weeks of regular running to and from Tincourt, and in the last stages of the Passchendaele fighting the train was running again in Flanders for a time. But on the whole the late autumn and winter were passed comparatively quietly.

When the great German offensive broke on the Bapaume front on March 21st, 1918, the train had just returned from Grévillers to Sotteville for overhauling, but during these days and nights of pressure the personnel were able to help the ambulance train stores dépôt at Rouen with the urgent dispatch of medical supplies. But on the 29th, No. 11 was on the move again, and there was a series of heavy loads from Namps, near Amiens. There were many incidents out of the ordinary during these anxious weeks, such as the evacuation of the Rémy clearing station preparatory to its withdrawal to a safer position, and the very frequent bombing of railway sidings, particularly at Etaples and Abbeville. But in June there was the more agreeable experience of a trip south to the Champagne area with a week's rest at the country siding of Linthes.

After the Allied offensive had opened between Rheims and Soissons, the train was again in Champagne, and two loads were brought down from Sézanne, including a number of Italian patients. This was the last period of normal running that the train's records show, for as the British advance progressed, attack following on attack, the train was kept constantly busy right on through the summer and early autumn. There was a period of heavy loads from the Villers-Bretonneux sector during late August and early September, after which came a no less busy time in the northern zone. Early in October the train came south again, to find very changed conditions on the lines of communication. The British advance had by then reached a considerable depth, and left behind it a wide belt of country with all its railway lines destroyed and all bridges blown up. The utmost efforts of the engineers could not keep pace with the advance of the troops, and though ambulance trains were taken as far as the new lines reached, the distance of loading-places from the scene of action grew steadily greater. The newly-laid lines too, were naturally very hastily constructed and often had only a single track, and the prevalence of delay-action mines hidden in the bed of the railway meant much additional delay in running. In some cases the C.C.S.'s were pitched over twenty miles from the railheads reached by the trains, and the delay caused by bringing four hundred or more patients by car all this distance meant that a loading

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often took a whole day. What with these conditions, the slowness of the running over the roughly laid metals, and the long waits to get a right of passage over single-line tracks, the difficulties of feeding a train-load of patients during a journey were extreme. Add to this the fact that during all this period of pressure the use of lights on board was strictly forbidden, so that the frequent night loadings had to be carried out in total darkness, inside and outside. Smooth, speedy journeys and regular ports of call were a thing of the past, and the strain on the staff's strength was not lessened by the necessity, according to official orders, of not remaining on board the train in sidings during night time on account of air raid dangers. The train may be considered lucky to have suffered only one derailment, which occurred at Achiet-le-Grand after a load had been taken on at Bapaume. Two coaches, one with twenty-four stretcher-cases on board, were seriously damaged, but the rest of the train, though very crowded, was able to continue the journey.

After the signing of the Armistice the work changed in nature, but not very much in volume. Like the other trains, No. 11 was used for the transport of returning prisoners of war, and men of many nationalities were carried to the bases, Italians, French, Russians, and Roumanians, as well as British. From Verdun large numbers of British were brought who had been set to work in the mines near Metz, and several similar journeys were made from various parts of Belgium. Early in December the train was carrying ordinary patients again, sick from the divisions advancing to the Rhine, and one trip was made up to Cologne itself. So the year closed with a journey which, only a few months before, would have seemed beyond all possibility.

In the first few days of January, 1919, the train was on its way to Cambrai to collect patients, when it again experienced a collision, this time in a thick mist near St. Pol. Luckily again no one was injured, but it was necessary to return to the repair-sheds at Sotteville, and while it was still there orders came through for demobilisation. The train's equipment was duly checked and returned to store, and on February 1st, after three years almost exactly, the staff of No. 11 left their train where they had first joined it. Since taking it over, they had carried a total of 112,777 patients. On the list of ambulance trains in order of all-round merit the second place was taken by No. 11 Train.

No. 5 Ambulance Train.

No. 5 Ambulance Train was the fourth and last train to be staffed by members of the F.A.U., and the circumstances under which it was taken over in August, 1916, from the R.A.M.C. crew who had manned her since the early months of the war, have already been mentioned. The story of this train, so far as the Unit is concerned, is naturally the shortest, but it is a record of heavy and continuous work; the totals of patients carried by No. 5 were higher during two or three periods than those by any of the other Unit trains.

The staff of the train was drawn from four separate sources. Twelve men were taken from each of the other three Unit trains, and the balance was

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made up by a detachment sent from the Unit's Headquarters. In comparison with the crews of the other trains, that of No. 5 had this initial handicap, that the others had all been trained together for their work; but it was not very long before joint experience had welded the four parts into an efficient whole. The new staff was assembled at Abbeville during the second week of August, and boarded the train there on the 10th. Like No. 11, this train was composed of miscellaneous French rolling-stock, twenty-one coaches in all, mostly second- and third-class passenger coaches of the "Etat" line, and luggage-vans of the "P.L.M." The absence of corridor connections was a great hindrance to the easy working of the train, and the lack of a common mess-room for the personnel made separate meals in various coaches an unfortunate necessity. On the day after their arrival, the new staff was inspected by the A.D.M.S., A.T., and on the night of August 13th they performed their first loading at Etaples.

This proved to be the first of a long series of base-to-base journeys made between Etaples and Calais. For six weeks No. 5 was employed on nothing else, making no fewer than thirty trips in forty days. As loading usually took place between 10 p.m. and 3 a.m., and was followed by a weary wait of several hours in a neighbouring siding with the patients on board, these first journeys were not less fatiguing than monotonous. But early in October the spell was broken by a visit of a few days to the "Etat" workshops at Sotteville and those of the "P.L.M." at Villeneuve St. Georges. This interval was a valuable breathing space before another bout of heavy work, the result of the desperate fighting at Beaumont Hamel and the Butte de Wallencourt during the dry weather which that November brought. Ten trips were made during the month, but they were mostly long and exacting ones, the cases carried being more serious than on the Etaples–Calais runs. Work continued steadily into December, and Christmas found No. 5 still busy between the Somme and the northern bases. The fighting round Pozières and Miraumont lasted well into January, and the train continued to evacuate from the C.C.S.'s of that sector down to Boulogne and Etaples. But during the memorable weeks of hard frost which began at the end of that month, the train had the good fortune to be sent again to the repair workshops, first at Paris and later at Rouen, this respite being followed by another series of trips to the Somme area.

The German strategic retirement which began on March 17th, 1917, led to some heavy fighting in the Bapaume-Bullecourt district and to the north of Arras. While the train was dealing with some of the casualties from the sector round Lens, it was instructed on April 8th to provide an N.C.O. and ten men to staff a Temporary Ambulance Train, a formation used in times of pressure for the conveyance of walking wounded whose condition did not require very much medical attention. This withdrawal of nearly a quarter of the crew's strength meant a considerable strain on those who were left to carry on, but fortunately the rush of work was not very long. The train was now working over the new country abandoned by the retreating Germans, and during a week's halt at Nesle the staff, like others in that part, made their first acquaintance with the extraordinary methods of devastation employed by a retiring army.

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On May 5th the T.A.T. was disbanded, and the eleven exiles returned to their own train. During the month they had made five journeys with close on 3,000 walking patients.

During May work was very constant, fifteen journeys being made, and base-to-base runs were once more the main feature, varied by occasional runs to the clearing stations behind Ypres and Arras. And from a personal point of view, the end of this month was made notable by the regretted departure of Donald Collier, who had been the train's senior N.C.O. since the previous August. He was succeeded by W. B. Owen, who occupied that post during the rest of the train's career.

Yet again No. 5 had to retire to the workshops in the early days of June, and the rest there was followed by a series of trips made to the Villers-Bretonneux and Péronne districts. They were remarkable for the curious medley of nationalities which was carried; one of these loads included, in addition to British and Colonial troops, three British civilians, a French officer, several Indians, a Portuguese, two Egyptians, and three Germans. July, too, was remarkable for the large number of Portuguese patients evacuated from the Lapugnoy-Bruay clearing stations. On the last day of July the long-expected British offensive in Flanders was begun, leading later to the terribly costly attacks on Passchendaele. These operations, of course, meant increased activity for the train, which made repeated journeys to the various railheads in the Ypres sector. At Rémy, on August 17th, the train was the target of a German aerial attack, but escaped damage only at the expense of the C.C.S. beside which it was standing. From this same place, on September 21st, the train brought down its heaviest load—700 patients, of whom 668 were wounded. A few journeys of an easier sort between Trouville, Rouen, and Le Hâvre, broke the series of Flanders trips, but these latter were resumed again throughout the greater part of October and November. During the last weeks of the year, the familiar lines of the Somme area were again traversed, though the pressure of work had by then subsided considerably.

The new year opened with another respite in the *ateliers* near Rouen and Paris; by now the train's crew were becoming well versed in the sights of the capital. But in February they were back in the less congenial surroundings of the stricken country behind the Cambrai front, and on one of these runs the presence of American patients among the British gave a sign of a new element in the war. The comparatively calm weeks that came before the German onslaughts of March and April were spent on the northern lines again, but the storm that followed brought the train south on a series of runs between the Doullens district and the northern ports. At Doullens on the night of April 6th–7th a number of bombs were dropped on either side of the train only a few yards distant. Most of the windows were shattered and the bodywork of the coaches riddled with fragments, and repairs had to be speedily carried through. The Trouville—Rouen—Le Hâvre routes saw the train again, carrying large loads of convalescent patients, during the latter part of April and the first fortnight, of May, but after that a return was made to the Doullens district, from which

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Australian troops, who had suffered heavily in the defence of Amiens, were brought down in considerable numbers. Many of the personnel will not soon forget the repeated air raids of this period.

Nor will they forget their singular piece of good fortune which followed in June. On May 29th the train was lying in garage at Abbeville under orders for Doullens, but a heavy air raid prevented the departure being made. This delay led to the train being commissioned to proceed instead down into Champagne, where British divisions were fighting alongside of the French during the German hammer-blows which then threatened the safety of Paris. Two days' travelling over lines that became more and more congested only took the train a part of its way, and meantime the rapid advance of the enemy made its original purpose vain. On June 1st it was directed back to Paris, and once more the engineers were engaged on repairs. During this stay some experience was made of the air raids by the Gothas on Paris, and of the bombardments by "Grosse Bertha." Once out of the workshops the train was dispatched to the secluded village of Theil-Cérisiers, in the valley of the Vanne, lying in delightful country not far from Sens. Here, to the growing astonishment of everybody, it was inexplicably left for three weeks, almost as if forgotten, and even if rations and fuel were hard to come by in so distant a spot, they were the pleasantest weeks the staff could have desired.

This interlude, however, was made up for by two months of incessant and really strenuous toil, made no easier by the increased frequency of air raids on railway centres such as Abbeville. Once again the train narrowly escaped destruction while garaged there. July and the first half of August were occupied mainly with a series of base-to-base trips, but from that time these were the exception rather than the rule. August indeed was a notable time in the train's record, for during that month no fewer than 31 trips were made, and the total number of patients carried was 11,969. The Allied advances meantime were opening up new country to the lines of communication, and the work during these fateful weeks was in this way interesting as well as severe. In mid-October, for instance, the train carried an unfamiliar class of patient, some sixty French civilians, old and young, women and children, suffering from exposure and gassing during the German occupation of Le Câteau. The influenza epidemic had during these weeks attacked the train's staff, who had to mourn the death of one of their number, J. F. W. Woodwiss, in hospital at Abbeville on October 29th. Early in the morning of November 1st, while travelling with patients, the train experienced a collision with a heavy coal-train near St. Pol. Though many of the coaches were derailed or partially telescoped, there was luckily no one seriously injured. This involved, of course, a further retirement to the workshops near Paris. While lying there, the Armistice was signed, and the staff had the enviable experience of being in Paris on that memorable day.

When the train was in running order again, though still short of some coaches, there was fresh work to be done and new routes to be explored. Released prisoners of war were by now crossing the frontier at various points, a large proportion suffering from various forms of illness and exhaustion, and

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the ambulance trains were being used to carry these unfortunate men down to the bases and to collecting centres. Nancy to Calais, and Lyons to Boulogne, were two memorable journeys of this nature, and there were several trips with ordinary patients from Tournai, Charleroi, Namur, and Douai. But, like No. 17 Train, the last journey of No. 5 as a complete train was interrupted by an accident, which occurred in the ruins of the station at Valenciennes on December 28th, and was followed by a final visit for the necessary repairs to the Sotteville sheds. But during this interval some of the undamaged coaches were detached, and sent up to Charmes to pick up more prisoners repatriated from Germany. In two trips 150 men were thus carried down, and on February 2nd these coaches rejoined the others at Sotteville.

On the next day, February 3rd, 1919, the final arrangements for leaving the train were completed, and the crew of No. 5 was disbanded. Since they had been working on No. 5 Train they had made 326 trips and carried a total of 119,863 patients.

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CHAPTER VI

MOTOR WORK AT DUNKIRK.

British Base Convoy, Dunkirk.

APART from the work of the "F.U." Groupement in the Dunkirk area, the cars of the Unit performed a variety of functions in and about that town. With a few exceptions from time to time, the Unit's cars might be said to have had a monopoly of voluntary Red Cross work in the district after the early part of 1915. When the British Army began to use Dunkirk as a base and joined the Allied authorities already in command there, the Unit made an offer to undertake the motor ambulance work required for British troops stationed in the region. From the purely administrative point of view there was a double interest in carrying on such work in Dunkirk: firstly, it helped to give the Unit a firm *pied à terre* in this important base, the most convenient possible for so much of its work, present or prospective; and secondly, it was always of the greatest value to have a reserve of cars and drivers in the neighbourhood of Headquarters, usefully employed, but available if necessary for more urgent needs there or elsewhere. There was, moreover, the consideration that since the Queen Alexandra Hospital was the one to which British patients in the area were taken, the motor ambulance work for this hospital could conveniently, and appropriately, be done by the Unit itself. From the beginning of 1916, then, the Unit provided all ambulance transport required for British troops, and the cars engaged on this work formed the nucleus of the British Base Convoy.

At the beginning of 1916 the obligation was not a heavy one, as the number of British in the town was very small. There might be only a couple of dozen patients carried, and a few hundred kilometres run, in a whole month. It was easy to carry this on with whatever ambulances were free from their other work. But as the British camps enlarged during that summer, the numbers of patients rose, and by the late autumn fully a hundred were carried in a month, involving, perhaps, two or three thousand kilometres running. It seemed likely that the British base would be still further developed during the next year (as it was), and to meet the coming needs application was made to set aside two of the Unit's ambulances specially for this work, to attach them formally to the nearest Army Motor Transport formation, and so enable them to obtain the necessary car supplies and drivers' rations, as authorised by General Routine Order 756. The request was granted towards the end of November, 1916, and the cars registered accordingly.

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From that time the work of the British Base Convoy expanded continuously, as a glance at the graph of motor records will show. The numbers carried and the mileage run both rose steadily, the increase being specially notable during the period when the Fourth Army occupied the coastal zone, including Malo, in the autumn. More cars were needed to meet the growing number of calls, and the D.M.S., L. of C. sanctioned the increase of the Convoy successively to 4, 6 and 7 cars, by October, 1917. During the late autumn, thanks to the generosity of the British Red Cross Society, six new G.M.C. ambulances replaced the old and less reliable cars which previously had been detailed for this work.

Much of the work of the British Base Convoy was not of a very exciting nature. For the most part it was similar to that done for the French by the " F.U." Groupement, especially as regards the routine work of the Queen Alexandra Hospital. Every day there were patients to be conveyed from the Medical Inspection Rooms to the hospital, or often accident cases to be brought from the docks. The heaviest work was found in the frequent evacuations, sometimes every day, from the Queen Alexandra Hospital to the General Hospitals at Calais, a run of forty kilometres each way. At one period cars were often employed to convey the medical officer of the area on his rounds. But the routine work was just such as had to be done at any base. In addition to that, however, Dunkirk provided work which had often a more spectacular side, and was certainly neither dull nor altogether lacking in danger. In taking over the ambulance transport for the district, the Unit naturally was responsible for the collection of casualties from air raids and bombardments from land or sea. These usually happened at night, so that every night a certain number of men drawn from the " F.U." and the British Base Convoy were detailed to stand by in case of need. In the event then of either French or British casualties, ambulances were ready for instant despatch. As may easily be imagined, this often involved work calling for considerable pluck and determination on the part of the drivers and their accompanying orderlies ; for a run through the darkness down to the docks, to a hospital, to a fire, or a search in some stricken quarter of the town while a raid was in progress, or even during a momentary lull, was none too pleasant an undertaking—more especially when, as often happened, it had to be done in the cheerless cold hours before dawn. Such experiences had not, of course, to be faced nightly, but at times they were both severe and frequent. Particularly was this so during September, 1917, when on twenty-seven nights of the month the cars of the British Base Convoy were on active duty most of the time between dusk and sunrise, as a result of the almost incessant raids during that period.

From the date of its formal inception in November, 1916, down to January, 1919, the Convoy ran a total of 164,593 kilometres, and carried 7,010 patients.

Headquarters Cars and Motor-Cycles.

The " F.U." Groupement and the British Base Convoy accounted for most of the Unit's cars employed in the immediate neighbourhood of Dunkirk,

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but there were a number of other cars, lorries, and motor-cycles engaged on various duties. For the conveyance of stores there was naturally a good deal of work for the heavy lorries, particularly in bringing goods landed at the docks up to the Stores Department at Malo. Supplies of all kinds were daily distributed by light lorries to the Queen Alexandra Hospital and the Recreation Rooms. Civilian relief work brought busy times for the lorries, especially during its rapid development in 1918, when goods were sent forward in large quantities to the stations of the Relief Sections. The urgency of this work put a heavy strain on the resources of the Headquarters cars, but it was greatly relieved by the generous provision of several four-ton lorries by the American Red Cross.

Almost without interruption from 1915 onwards, a regular daily service between Dunkirk, Calais, and Boulogne was maintained. Motor-cycles ran alternately with light lorries, the service being run in conjunction with the British Red Cross Society, who bore half of the cost. It was of great use in keeping the Unit's administration in touch with the Headquarters of the B.R.C.S., with the Unit representative at Boulogne, with the Post Office there, and also with the leave-boat. Mails and daily newspapers were carried for several Red Cross organisations stationed at Calais as well as for the Unit itself. The run to Boulogne was over seventy kilometres each way, and during hard winter weather was often a difficult one in the hilly country to the south of Calais. The duties of motor-cycle despatch-riders included many runs in the locality and to the out-stations within reach. In the case of the civilian work they, like all others, had to meet the added strain of long distances as these sections moved further forward during the advance in the autumn of 1918. But thanks to the generosity of several members, and once again of the American Red Cross, a number of Sunbeam motor-cycles were added to the strength of the despatch-riding service, and satisfactory communication was established between places so far apart as Brussels, Ghent, Courtrai, and other important centres.

The remainder of the motor vehicles at Headquarters were engaged on miscellaneous work. There were a few civilian cases to be carried now and then, and before the Civilian Evacuation Section had grown up, occasional evacuations from forward areas were made by Headquarters cars during the winter of 1916-1917. There were also the staff touring-cars, of which several were required for administrative purposes, visiting ambulance trains or convoys, or for such special functions as taking the Unit dentist on his rounds of those scattered sections which might require his attention.

During 1917 two large hangars were built by the Unit Works Department to house the cars at Headquarters. The first stood on the Avenue du Kursaal on a strip of ground known traditionally as " the Bank," beside the wooden hut and palisaded enclosure which formed the petrol and oil stores. The second was a large erection, in an enclosed courtyard adjoining the Petit Casino, and could accommodate twenty-four cars under cover. Both were of great service, not only as shielding the cars from wind, weather, and drifting sand, but as some protection against the " scrounging " habits of some gentry of the neighbourhood.

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Reserve Park.

This was the official name (many Unit members will be surprised to learn) of a spot more commonly known as the " Graveyard." The cars which were sheltered in this courtyard among the back-gardens of the Avenue du Casino were of two classes. Firstly there were cars so badly smashed by shell fire or by accident as to be of no use, except as providing spare parts for their more fortunate survivors. Secondly came those which, though capable of running, it was not advisable to use except in times of real pressure. Some were shamelessly extravagant in their consumption of petrol, some were generally obsolescent, others suffered from ailments which it passed the skill of the Unit's best mechanics to cure. It was a mournful picture, even to the casual observer; but never more so than one morning after a certain air raid, when it was found that a bomb had dropped in their midst and given the *coup de grâce* to several of these veterans. But nevertheless when the stress of work was great in 1918, some of the oldest of the " Graveyard's " occupants rose to the occasion, and took the road again at the base to release more stalwart members of a younger generation for work at the front.

The Garages.

In the first days of the Unit's existence, the problem of motor repairs was fortunately not a very pressing one. There were not many more than half-a-dozen cars at their disposal, and these were new ones. But negotiations were soon started to secure the use of M. Albert Lenozeh's garage in the Rue Forbin, almost opposite the entrance to the Hotel du Kursaal, the first Headquarters. As more cars arrived, and as the wear and tear of constant running on the bad roads began to show, the garage work soon became of great importance. More space was needed to cope with the increased number of cars, and the Garage Lenozeh was taken over as a whole, to be known as No. 1 Garage.

Its original equipment was augmented by the Unit till it possessed a very serviceable plant. A couple of lathes were installed, a drilling machine, carborundum wheels, charging apparatus, and the necessary driving gear. With the assistance of two engineering firms and a foundry in the locality for machining very large plants or making odd castings, the garage staff was able to deal with practically every sort of mechanical job that arose. Later it was necessary to take additional garage accommodation, but No. 1 from first to last was the centre of the Unit's workshop activities.

And a busy scene it always was, with hardly ever less than five or six cars on the floor space, their bonnets off, engines down, wheels or springs removed. The lathes were never idle, driven by a small three-phase motor; the forge glowed at the other side of the shop, the smith and striker beside the anvil. Blow-lamps roared hoarsely on the gas supply for brazing and soldering jobs, while in another corner stood rows of car accumulators being recharged from a dynamo. All kinds of smaller work were in hand as well as the main function

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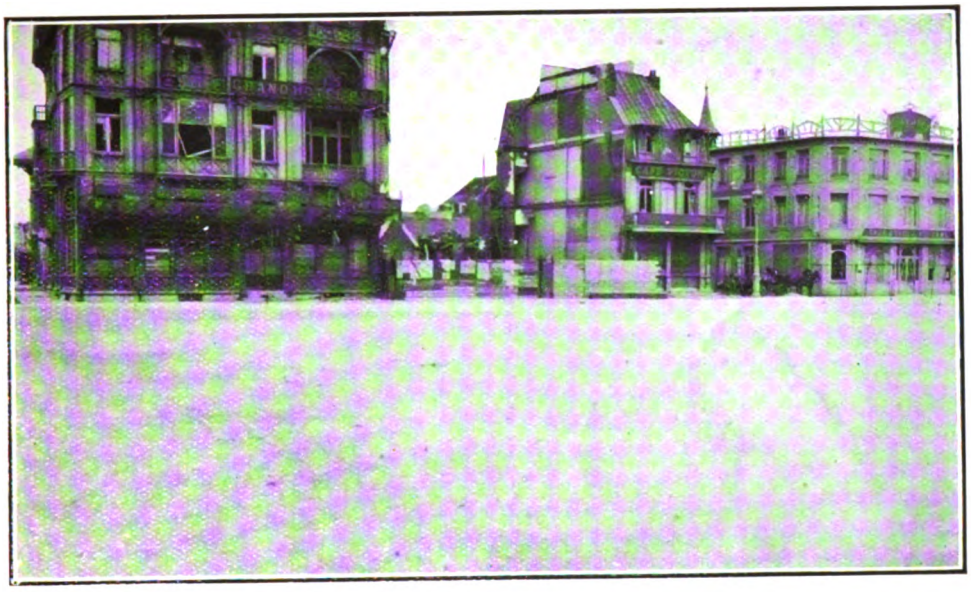
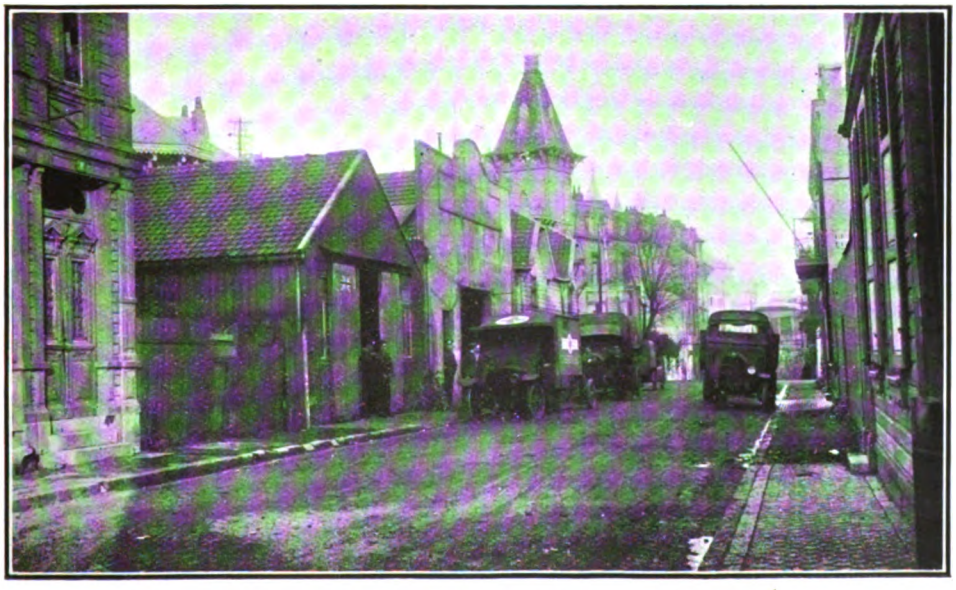


Plate XXIII — HOTEL DU KURSAAL AND HOTEL PYL, MALO. — Photo 1919



Facing p. 168 — RUE FORBIN, MALO. — Photo 1918

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of motor-repairs, from the treatment of leaking jugs from the hospitals to the maintenance of the fickle telephone service which connected the separated offices of the Headquarters departments.

In the corner by the doors stood a small glass-enclosed office, that of the Officer in charge of the Garages. Here records were kept of the work in progress, and lists of that which awaited attention. The mechanical biographies of the cars had to be kept up to date, the value of all material or spare parts issued to each being entered on a card index. The clerical work involved in this was considerable, but owing to the complex conditions under which Headquarters cars were run it was essential. For it should be remembered in this connection that the bulk of the necessary supplies were drawn gratis from the British, French, or Belgian Armies, or latterly from the American Red Cross, for the cars specifically engaged on work for each of these. To record the use of material, and to allocate correctly requisitions and costs, was by no means a simple matter.

But No. 1 was not the only busy spot in the Rue Forbin; in fact that short street had almost the air of being solely the property of the Unit's Transport Department. Cars stood usually down both sides of the street, some sound of limb, others only too obviously awaiting their turn of admittance to the garage. Adjoining No. 1 on one side was the garage of the Hotel Pyl, which was secured after long negotiations and devoted to the needs of the motor-cycles. On the other came the stables of the Villa Coligny, which were adapted to house the motor stores. This department was responsible for supplying all the material and spare parts to all Unit cars, except such as were issued direct from the Armies concerned. To do this large stocks had to be kept of a great diversity of articles. In the upper part of this building, a Detail Issue Department was maintained for supplying the daily needs of the garages and of cars in the neighbourhood, special workshop tools, or the spare parts, accessories, tyres, and the like, for running use. Here too was the invaluable vulcanising plant, used for the repair of all inner tubes used by cars within reach of Headquarters. Next door to this again came the low wooden building which housed the Headquarters Transport Office.

Two or three minutes' walk away, in the Rue de Valenciennes, No. 2 Garage was to be found, installed in the *écurie* of the Hotel du Cygne. Its equipment was not so elaborate as that of No. 1, but it undertook general repair and overhauling work on much the same lines. Its special feature was a most efficient group of bodywork experts. The majority of the Unit's cars, in some sections nearly all the cars, were at one time or another damaged by shell fragments. There was usually, therefore, a good deal of work to be done in replacing the smashed woodwork, fitting new canvas, or in many cases entirely rebuilding the bodies of cars. The proficiency of workmanship in this direction was very notable, especially in the repairs and alterations done to the coach-built touring-cars of the Unit. The work of painting or varnishing cars was carried on either in the spacious workshops of M. Castellain, the

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well-disposed Deputy Mayor of Malo, or in a series of smaller private garages which successively bore the title of No. 3.

Such were the premises and functions of the Headquarters garages, and now the most important factor in their work must be mentioned—the personnel. Not only for their technical skill, but for their untiring willingness and steady devotion to the clocklike routine of their work—as wearisome and unexciting as most munition work in England—the Transport Section of the Unit was laid under a deep obligation to them. True, they had billets when others often had none, and life at Headquarters had other redeeming features, but to toil in the garages from eight o'clock till half-past five, on six days of the week, month after month, even year after year, in the drab surroundings of Malo and its wind-swept sand-dunes, was not inspiring. Over and over again, too, men would work far into the night in order to complete some repairs urgently needed, and appear at eight next morning for the next day's round. Most of them would willingly have exchanged their places in the workshops for Convoy life. In Dunkirk they had many of the drawbacks of the front (especially on clear moonlight nights) with none of its compensating glamour. The nature of their work would try the most stout-hearted at times; very often a car on which they had spent their energies for days on end would depart from the garage only to return a day or two later with another mishap to set right. To the driver it seemed (of course) miraculous that his car did not become a casualty every single night on the crowded, narrow, shell-pitted roads in the pitchy darkness behind the front. But to the mechanic the arrival of the familiar ambulances with radiators bent in or front axles twisted, seemed (of course) to show a carelessness and incompetence that was most discouraging. It is only just, therefore, to place on record the steadiness with which the mechanical staff worked unremittingly in the garages, some of them for years, foregoing the more attractive life of the driver that their skill might be used to the best advantage of the Unit.

The Transport Office.

The Transport Office was housed in a small wooden building, an annexe of the Villa Coligny, at No. 13, Rue Forbin. It had a dual function, providing an office for the Officer in charge of cars at Headquarters, and also for the Unit Transport Officer, who was responsible for the administration of all the branches of motor work throughout the Unit. The former directed the activities of the "F.U." Groupement, the British Base Convoy, and all other motor work in the area except the garages. These duties required the continuous presence of some member of the office staff to deal with the incessant calls on the British, French, or internal telephones, and to meet all the demands made on it the staff had to show much promptness, ingenuity, and systematic organisation.

The work of that part of the Office not concerned directly with the Dunkirk region dealt with all the motor formations of the Unit, whether working for the British Army, the French Army, or for civilian evacuation and relief.

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Scattered as these were from Flanders to the Argonne, this was a complex piece of administration, but the staff of the Transport Office, including the Officer in charge of Headquarters cars, was never more than four in number. But, needless to say, its duties were numerous.

In the first place it co-ordinated all motor sections so far as Unit administration and Unit supplies were concerned. Through the Transport Office passed all matters concerning internal control, personnel, or supplies. With all sections it had to be kept closely in touch, and, especially in the case of the French Convoys, the problem of liaison was not easy. But the end was achieved more or less completely by the receipt of routine reports from the sections, and as frequently as possible by personal visits. Weekly reports were prepared detailing the work of each Convoy or station, and a monthly statement showed the distribution of men and cars, the number of men sick or on leave, and the number of cars off the road. After the Unit's sections became widely scattered in the summer of 1916, these reports were sent out regularly to each branch, and were of considerable value in maintaining the "intelligence" service of the Transport Office. Complete records were kept of the mileage run and number of patients carried, the movements of Convoys and the formation of the various stations. These were drawn up in considerable detail, and a box file showed the running statistics, driver, work, and whereabouts of each car month after month.

By a system of priced invoicing of all goods supplied by the Commissariat, Quartermaster, or Motor Stores to the motor sections, the Transport Office was able to keep a check on the cost of all branches, and to enforce a rigid economy that was only too necessary till the advent of the American Red Cross relieved the strain. The system undoubtedly helped to reduce expenditure to a minimum, and at the same time to develop to a maximum all sources of supply or revenue, such as the *solde* of the French Convoys or the rations for drivers of British ambulances. It led to the Transport Section of the Unit—with the exception of certain civilian branches—being practically self-supporting so far as food and general supplies were concerned. For the maintenance of the three French Convoys, for example, the general Unit funds were only called upon to the extent of rather less than 5 per cent. of their cost.

For details of control and the general routine of work, the Unit's Convoys dealt direct with the authorities under whom they were placed, but for all larger questions—the opening of fresh work, the alteration of personnel or cars, and the like—the Transport Office had to be in constant communication with many officials. This was especially so in connection with the French work, in particular with the *D.S.A.* (*Direction des Services Automobiles*) at General-, Army-, or Divisional-Headquarters, and the *O.S.A.* (*Office des Sections Alliées*) in Paris, which dealt with all questions of personnel. Moreover there was constant correspondence with the Transport Department of the British Red Cross Society, with the American Red Cross, and with private donors of cars, and a multitude of forms and returns had to be rendered with unfailing regularity. Thus to one group of outside authorities the Transport Office

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was responsible for the fulfilment of certain obligations, to another group for satisfactory reports that their property was in good condition and being properly utilised.

But from the point of view of the Unit as a whole, the most important function of the Transport Office was the efficient organisation and distribution of the motor resources at the Unit's disposal. Circumstances were constantly changing; during slack times it had to look round for opportunities of useful service, in busy times to divide the cars and drivers between the competing claimants so that they might be used to the best advantage. But care had always to be taken that liabilities for work were not undertaken out of proportion to the reserve at hand. At times of crisis it was frequently necessary to transfer cars from one section to another, and to this end the conditions of service had to be such that mobility was not endangered. Not least important was the task of seeing that, through being separated geographically, drivers and others did not become members of individualist sections, each working on its own lines without regard to the needs or aspirations of the rest. None of these were easy tasks, and for their fulfilment they called for administrative abilities of a high order. It is only fitting to record here the successful work of Laurence Cadbury, as Officer in charge of the Transport Section of the Unit. To this post he brought not only a close personal knowledge of the work of the motor sections, having himself been *Chef-Adjoint* of S.S.A. 13 until the autumn of 1916, but also a measure of energy and enthusiasm invaluable in the leadership of so many men engaged in so many different functions. In all times of stress and difficulty, no less than in the humdrum round, his unfailing cheerfulness could be counted on as a constant factor in the Unit's administration.

The following analysis of the cars and men employed in the Transport Section of the Unit is taken from the monthly statement for November, 1918, and is typical of almost any period during the twelve months prior to demobilisation.

	Cars, etc.		Personnel.	
S.S.A. 13	26		48	
„ 14	29		49	
„ 19	27		40	
F.U.	16		23	
French Military	—	98	—	160
Belgian Relief Section	12		16	
„ „ „ (Southern)	6		7	
„ „ „ (Ravit.)	6		6	
Belgian Civilian Ambulance Section	2		2	
American Red Cross	3		3	
Search Party	3		3	
Civilian	—	32	—	37
H.Q. British Base Cars	7		7	
British Military	—	7	—	7
H.Q. Administrative, Miscellaneous, Reserve, & Repair	51		14	
Garages and Motor Stores	—		38	
H.Q.	—	51	—	52
Cars, etc. ..	188		Men	256

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Plate XXIV AFTER LONG-RANGE BOMBARDMENT, MALO. Facing p. 172

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CHAPTER VII

THE RECREATION ROOMS.

ONE of the interesting results of the endeavour of the F.A.U. to do any work that seemed to want doing, was the development of the Recreation Rooms in Dunkirk and its neighbourhood. It began in May, 1916, and although at first there was some debate as to whether such work could properly be carried on by a Red Cross organisation, necessity won the day, and this branch of the Unit's varied activities received the sanction of both military and Red Cross authorities. And there was indeed a need for such work being done by somebody. For Dunkirk in war-time was a dismal spot, its streets dull and depressing by day, and at night unlit and deserted. Public amusements within the *zone des armées* were practically prohibited by the French authorities, and the British units stationed in this area—Naval, military, and aviation—being rather isolated from the rest of the British forces, suffered from the lack of any provision for their leisure hours. There were none of the valuable Y.M.C.A. huts which were to be found all over the main British zone, and the only refuge from the streets were the ordinary *estaminets*, whose range of amusements was meagre in the extreme.

Working on the docks was a company of Scottish labour troops, and it was the problem of finding some place where they could read and write, buy their twist or cigarettes, or get some tea or coffee that first brought the Unit into this field. The Base Commandant and the British Consul, both keenly interested in the welfare of these men, sought the Unit's help, and the Seamen's Institute, which had been deserted since 1914, was put at its disposal if the necessary staff could be found. The O.C.'s appeal soon brought a response, for there were several members of the Unit who had previous experience in such work and were glad to have an opportunity of resuming it. The first party was soon busy cleaning up the large room of the Institute and the necessary counters and shelves were erected. Towards the end of May a Unit concert party gave an entertainment to a crowded audience to inaugurate this, the first Recreation Room and Canteen for British Service men in the Dunkirk area. Someone dubbed it the " Pig and Whistle," and the name stuck, even in the sober Routine Orders of the Base Commandant.

The experiment was an instant success, and soon a very large number of men were regular visitors to the room in their spare time. Concerts, tournaments and classes were held as regularly as possible, and the canteen was not the least busy corner. In fact, before July was out, it was obvious that further

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accommodation was urgently needed, for there were more men to be provided for than the single room of the " Pig and Whistle," or its small staff, could hope to satisfy. Accordingly it was decided to build a hut on an open site not far away, on the main road into the docks. It was designed by the Unit's architect with a skill that made it not only attractive in appearance, but convenient for working purposes, and under his direction the hut was constructed by the Unit Works Department. A number of decorative panels painted by a Unit artist gave a distinction to the interior which few similar huts could have possessed. The canteen, kitchen, and staff quarters were set back in a wing, the main hall being thus left free for entertainments, with a spacious stage at one end, flanked by a small library and the superintendent's office. This hut, under the sign of the " Cat and Fiddle," was opened on Christmas Day, 1916, by the Earl of Athlone (then H.R.H. Prince Alexander of Teck), and from the beginning there was no doubt that it was going far to meet a very real need. It was centrally situated and well known to men stationed in the town, and, with the inevitable fluctuations due to weather or the movements of troops, the work at the " Cat " continued steadily till the spring of 1918. Meantime the original " Pig " was scarcely less busy than its neighbour, and was attractively re-decorated in March, 1917.

The question of enlarging the " Cat and Fiddle " premises was under consideration in March, 1918, when the decision of the military authorities to remove the dock labourers' camps outside the town made it necessary to reconsider the hut's future. The problem was helped to a solution by the hut's patrons themselves, who sent up to their Commanding Officer a petition asking him to induce the Unit to put up a hut for their use at Mardyck, their new camp, and so it came that the " Cat and Fiddle " followed the men. The dockers undertook the work of transport and re-erection themselves, and advantage was taken of the change to make several useful alterations and extensions, including a room for classes to be held in, and a billiard room. In its new surroundings, right inside the camp, the hut became even more active than before.

Meanwhile there is the start of another hut to record. In the summer of 1916 the Unit was approached by the Commanding Officer of the large R.N.A.S. aerodrome at St. Pol, on the west side of the port, as to the possibility of a recreation hut being opened there. On September 15th a temporary canteen and reading and writing room were started in a large and cheerless hangar in the aerodrome of St. Pol, while a hut on the same plan as the " Cat and Fiddle " was under construction by a local contractor. On December 2nd this third venture was formally opened for use. For some reason it never enjoyed a distinctive title and was usually known simply as " St. Pol." But there was no doubt that the air-mechanics were warmly appreciative of this provision for their comfort. They threw themselves into the organisation of concerts, games, competitions, classes, lectures, and debates with great energy, and a committee, of which the Commanding Officer of the Wing was president, was formed to control all these activities. The hut became the centre

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of the camp's social life, and it was frequently overcrowded, though from the proximity of the aerodromes, its amusements were liable to many interruptions by German air attacks.

Some account of the activities carried on within the huts will not be out if place in these pages, though in the main they were similar to those of kindred nstitutions elsewhere. The canteens were always busy, and, as well as supplying a variety of small necessities, were valued for the minor luxuries of fruit and chocolate purchased to supplement the sound but monotonous fare of Army rations. Entertainments varied from the " sing-song " given at short notice to the concerts organised by Miss Lena Ashwell and sent out under the Y.M.C.A., or those given by a small Dunkirk orchestra and some excellent French musicians whose visits were always welcome. Concert parties from various formations in the district and from the F.A.U. itself (including the " Faullies "), made frequent appearances at the three huts. But these were later developments, for in the early days at the " Pig and Whistle " the performers had to be drawn, sometimes by physical force, from the audience, and strange and varied were the unexpected talents thus revealed. The most staid, elderly and unlikely men, would sometimes agree after much persuasion " to sing something," and would walk very deliberately up to the platform to sing, quite unaccompanied, the most mournful old Scottish songs, with the audience wailing out the chorus. And many will remember a popular favourite in a tall Irishman, who, off the stage, seemed the most solemn of men, but on it always won a great reception with a song " All for the sake of Finnigan," with a lively clog dance to follow. Sometimes at these informal shows, the audience contained so many performers that the difficulty was to find a place for all on the programme. But in time it was possible, until well on into 1918, to hold a regular concert every Saturday evening in each of the three huts. Classes were always more difficult to keep running, not so much from lack of willing teachers and learners, as from the unsettled conditions under which men lived, for in few cases were Army units permanent either in location or composition. French classes, however, flourished throughout, and mathematics, shorthand, economics, literature and book-keeping all had their supporters at various times. Lectures too were provided by Y.M.C.A. lecturers and by some members of the Unit, and there were several lively debates held. At all the huts there was a generous supply of books, newspapers, and periodicals, and lending libraries (which owed much to the gifts of Friends and other supporters in England) were a valuable feature of the work. To sailors setting off on a cruise parcels of books and papers were frequently given.

The religious side of the huts' work was not the least important. A fellowship meeting during the week and a service on Sunday evenings were the regular features at first, and, though attendance varied, they were always held. Much valuable help was given in this direction by Army chaplains of all denominations, and by several members of other sections of the Unit, some of whom were responsible for furnishing a small chapel in the underground cellars of the " Pig and Whistle " buildings.

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The huts had much to be thankful for in their surprising immunity from damage by air raids or bombardment, for all were situated in the areas most sought after by the German raiders. A part of the "Pig's" buildings was actually hit, and the windows of all were so frequently smashed that oiled calico took the place of glass. The St. Pol hut was lucky in avoiding destruction by a great fire that resulted from one particularly heavy attack. On several occasions the personnel of the huts were able to render first-aid to the victims of these raids, and it was usual to send out search parties for possible casualties when shells or bombs fell close at hand.

For a month or so after the Armistice, work went on as usual at the huts, but when the great demobilisation centres were established round Dunkirk they tended to lose much of their old social qualities, and became little more than canteens for passing troops. The responsibility for running the "Pig and Whistle" was assumed by the Missions for Seamen early in 1919, and on February 15th the St. Pol hut was given to the Scottish Churches organisation. At the "Cat and Fiddle" a small party of Unit men stayed on until the end of March, nearly a month after the Unit's H.Q. were closed down, and then the hut was handed over as a gift to the Y.M.C.A.

The work of the Recreation Rooms during these years was not of a nature that could be gauged by statistics or even by detailed description. Its special value was of a more intimate kind than the outward work of canteens and concerts would at first sight show, and if the men who carried on the work needed any encouragement in its often wearisome routine, they had it in the spirit of friendship which grew up between themselves and the men they came to know.

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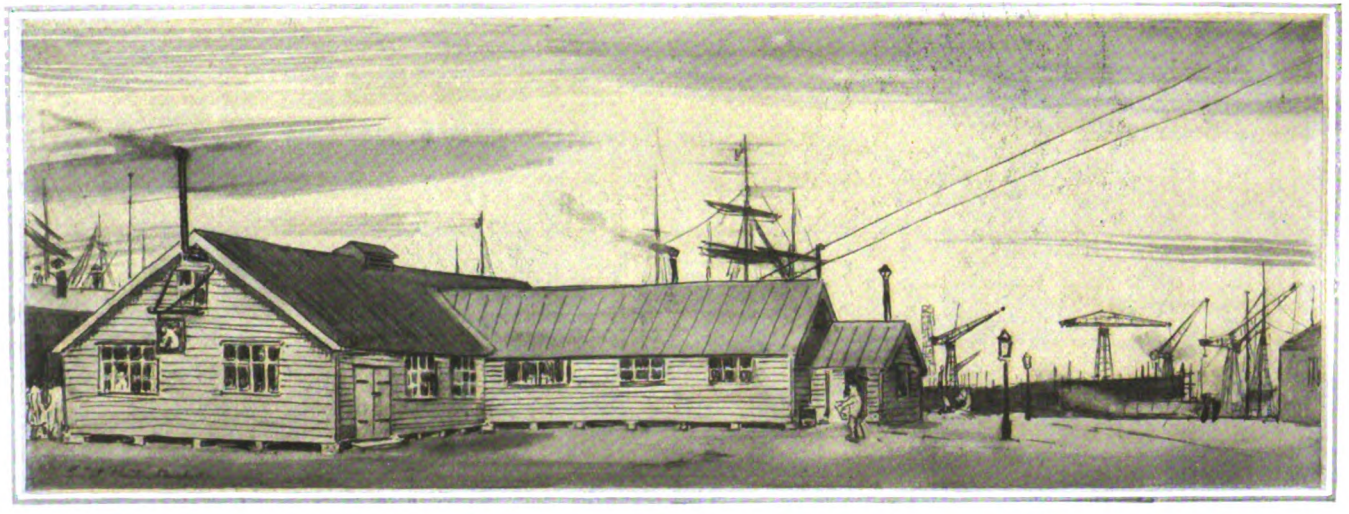

Plate XXV "Cat and Fiddle," Dunkirk Docks. Facing p. 176

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CHAPTER VIII

HEADQUARTERS AND GENERAL ADMINISTRATION.

IN these chapters so far only passing mention has been made of the general administration of the Friends' Ambulance Unit. We have seen how, from a small compact group, it expanded with its work into a large and scattered organisation, engaged in a number of varied activities in many widely-separated parts of the war zone. But some account is due of the central organisation which controlled the Unit as a whole, and was responsible for its direction to the Committee in London, whose formation was recorded in the opening chapter, and to the various authorities, British, French, and Belgian, under whose jurisdiction its work was carried on.

When the original members of the Friends' Ambulance Unit (or, as they were then designated, the First Anglo-Belgian Ambulance Unit) landed at Dunkirk in October, 1914, they found work to their hand, almost before they had established themselves in any administrative sense. But when the work at the station sheds was begun it was necessary to find some local headquarters, where the personnel could live between their turns of duty, and where the stores could be housed and ambulance cars centred. Such a place was found, chiefly through the good offices of Mr. Sarell, H.M. Consul, in Malo-les-Bains, the seaside suburb of Dunkirk. This was the Hotel du Kursaal, a small wooden hotel and café looking towards Dunkirk over the broad open space of the Champ de Manœuvres and some derelict public gardens.

It became a view familiar to all members of the Unit, for the three successive buildings occupied by its Headquarters all faced that same skyline across the angular mounds of the fortifications. They will all remember the twin water-towers of the town, the Belfry, the Hôtel de Ville, the long jagged row of house roofs, barracks, factories; and further along, the docks with the lighthouse and the vast warehouses, the gaunt cranes of the shipyards, and the hard straight lines of the jetties stretching out to sea. Malo itself, whatever may have been its attractions in peace time, became in war time half-deserted, and had all the melancholy of an empty watering-place: rows of shut-up wooden villas with fantastically cheerful names; here and there a posse of abandoned bathing machines; in the Place du Kursaal a public clock which stood year in, year out, at ten to five; in the Place Turenne, an ornate bandstand where later an air raid syren was installed. As the months went on the long sea front was gradually overwhelmed by sand drifting up on to its unswept pavement. In fine summer weather Malo retained a certain gaiety, and there were the compensations of

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bathing to set against the catalogue of its deficiencies, but throughout each winter it resumed its air of decrepitude with deplorable regularity.

But there were substantial reasons for choosing Dunkirk or Malo as a base for the Unit's development, and there was no need to regret the choice of the "Kursaal" as the first Headquarters. The chief of these was the ease of communication with England. There were many facilities for the carriage of stores and personnel from England to Dunkirk Harbour, first by Naval transports from Dover, and later for goods by a line of steamers from London direct. Although subsequently an alternative route opened up through Boulogne, the transport of stores direct from London to Dunkirk was continued throughout. This was of great value to the Unit's organisation, as so much of its work, especially in the earlier days, lay in Dunkirk or in the country most easily reached by road from that base. After the early part of 1915, all personnel had to pass through Boulogne in travelling to or from England, but from that port there was frequent communication by road or railway with Dunkirk. The fact also that Dunkirk, from a military point of view, was mainly an inter-Allied town, rather than the base of one or other Army alone, had obvious advantages for a unit working in conjunction with several Allied authorities. All things considered, then, it was a fortunate circumstance that led the Unit's first leaders to make Malo their Headquarters, giving them, as it did, good lines of communication with England and with their forward stations, and allowing them room for a subsequent expansion of offices, garages, stores, and billets, which in a town more fully occupied by civilians or military might have been more difficult. In the triangular block of the Kursaal, Headquarters were established, and remained there until the autumn of 1916.

From the very first the Unit stood in a close relationship with the British Red Cross Society in France. The first band of men came out to the war zone under the sanction of that important body, of which the Unit was really an affiliated member. The official recognition accorded to the Unit by the British Red Cross was of great value as giving the former a definite status in the eyes of authorities both military and civil. No less valuable was the material help given, without which the Unit could not easily have undertaken or accomplished much of the work which it actually did. It is pleasant, too, to record the friendly relations between the Headquarters of the Unit and those of the British Red Cross Society at Boulogne, and few messages of encouragement and appreciation were more welcome to the Unit than those from the high officials of the Red Cross. To their sympathy and wise counsel, especially of Sir Arthur Lawley and the Earl of Donoughmore, Commissioners of the Joint War Committee of the British Red Cross Society and the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, and to their staff, the Unit owed a great deal which only those who had experience of its administration can appreciate to the full.

Broadly speaking, the history of the Unit's administration falls most naturally into the three periods marked by the régimes of its three successive Officers Commanding. The problems of policy and organisation which confronted each were different, and by glancing at some of the most important of

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these in turn, we shall be able to see how the Unit of October, 1914, with its forty-three members, developed into the large body of later days with over six hundred members, and how much adjustment was required to meet the change in circumstances of its existence in France.

Under the first Officer Commanding, Philip Baker, the Headquarters staff was simply organised to meet the needs of these early days. The Officer Commanding was assisted by a Principal Medical Officer (Dr. Humphrey Nockolds) who, in charge of the other doctors and the nurses, controlled the medical side of the Unit's work; by an Adjutant (Leslie B. Maxwell), who dealt with questions of personnel, stores, finance and, under the guidance of the O.C., correspondence with the London Committee, the Headquarters of the British Red Cross Society, and the various military authorities; and by an Officer in charge of Field Stations (Geoffrey W. Young), who supervised the actual work of the various out-stations in the forward area. There were also a Transport Officer and Quartermaster. It was a small staff, but before long, as the work expanded quickly, it was necessary to add to these two Assistant Adjutants, an Officer in charge of Stores, and a Censor. But on the whole, in these days before the war became a routine, the internal administration required was small and the external was largely a matter of personal negotiation. And in later days, when the Headquarters staff could be counted by dozens and the offices spread over many rooms, there were some who looked back regretfully to those simpler times when the Adjutant might have been seen walking down to the nearest stationer's shop for pen and paper to make out his lists of stores needed from London.

To Philip Baker himself, the Unit owed a heavy debt of gratitude. He gave the Unit its first shape, and it retained the impress of his leadership long after he had left it. How much the success of the Unit in its early days of testing was due to his untiring energy, his quick adaptability, and his generous idealism, only those who worked in close personal touch with him can fully realise. But all who worked under him recognised his power of leadership, which went far to establish the Unit's reputation on a firm basis, and to them it was no surprise when in other spheres of activity, with the First British Ambulance Unit for Italy, and later in the service of the State, he won well-merited distinction.

To the regret of his many friends Philip Baker decided to resign his position as Officer Commanding the Unit at the end of June, 1915, and on July 1st, Leslie B. Maxwell, who throughout had acted as his Adjutant, was chosen by the Committee to succeed him. By the date of this appointment the second stage in the Unit's general development had already begun, and to the new Commanding Officer fell the task of regularising the Unit's position in France, and of reorganising its internal structure so as to meet the new circumstances in which it found itself. At Headquarters there were changes. The Commanding Officer was assisted as before by the Principal Medical Officer on the medical side, and by an Adjutant who conducted many negotiations with outside authorities on his behalf. A Deputy Adjutant was appointed in May, 1916, to take

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charge of all matters concerning personnel, their provision from England and their movements from one branch to another in France. Further there were a Finance Officer, an Officer in charge of Transport, and a Stores Officer. An Officer for general administration at Headquarters, the Commanding Officer's secretary, censors, a postmaster, clerks and typists completed the Staff.

But these gradual changes in the formation of the Headquarters staff were only signs of the Unit's growth and of its more stabilised nature. For the period which followed Leslie Maxwell's taking over of the command was in many ways the most difficult in the Unit's history. The departure of Philip Baker and others in the summer of 1915 had marked as it were the end of the Great Adventure; after this time, in some degree, the history of pioneers was closed, and the days of romance had passed. What happened to the Unit was perhaps only a reflection in miniature of what was happening to the whole of the Allied organisation on the Western front, when once the early excitement had cooled and the Armies were settling down to a stationary campaign which seemed more and more hopelessly immobile as the months wore on. And it may easily be imagined how hard it was, for members of a voluntary and independent body, to accept the inevitable routine and discipline which the new conditions demanded, and to substitute systematic work for free initiative. The undertaking of official work for the British, such as the Abbeville Hospital or the first ambulance train, involved a loss of the old independence and a closer relationship with authority, whether represented by the Army or by the B.R.C.S. Passes, permits, sanctions, returns, card-indices, and the like were the outward tokens of a changed order. It was, in fact, rather a dispiriting process, and credit is due to those who could look beneath the surface and estimate the proper value of the work to be done, unattractive or monotonous though it might appear. A change in composition was going on, for many had turned to the freer atmosphere of Italy, and some who had joined mainly in the spirit of adventure, and from no objection to military service as such, had returned home to enlist. It almost appeared for a time as if the heart had gone out of the Unit, and to face this situation the successor of Philip Baker required no small measure of coolness, foresight and courage. Fortunately for the Unit these qualities were brought to the task by the new Commanding Officer in a degree which surprised many who remembered that he had only lately celebrated his twenty-first birthday.

The further afield the Unit's activities spread and the greater its numbers, the more complex did its administration naturally become. By the summer of 1915, over and above the work in the Dunkirk area, there were the French Convoys, an ambulance train, the Abbeville Hospital, and many branches of civilian relief. All this involved a multitude of negotiations, and as time went on they became more and more widespread. During most of its existence abroad the Unit was carrying on work under the British Navy, the British Army, both in front and base areas, the French Army, both medical services at the base and transport services in front zones, and under many French and Belgian civilian authorities. Such a list might be extended by mention of work at recreation rooms done for the British mercantile marines,

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and many minor activities, but it will suffice to show that the task of controlling an organisation so widely scattered was no light one. Apart from constant communication between sections of the Unit by post and telephone, personal visits had to be paid by the O.C. and his principal officers, now to an ambulance train whose location changed from day to day or even from hour to hour, now to a convoy which might be stationed three hundred or four hundred kilometres away from Headquarters. Frequent visits were necessary also to various Army Headquarters, now to Montreuil, now to Cassel, now to Abbeville; to the British Red Cross Society's Headquarters at Boulogne; to the seat of the Belgian Government at Le Hâvre; or to the French *Grand Quartier Général*. To keep in touch with the Unit Committee at home, visits to London also were sometimes inevitable, but fortunately these were reduced in number by the possibility of telephonic communications from Dunkirk. A body so much divided into scattered sections as the Unit after its early days was in some danger of losing the sense of its common identity. Various means were adopted to avoid this as much as possible. At Headquarters the O.C. from time to time delivered speeches, explaining passing events within the Unit, its actual position and work, and the probabilities of future developments. These addresses were circulated in typescript to all sections. Routine orders showing all movements of personnel, and any information it was desirable to be widely known, were also sent round daily in the same way.

The provision of personnel for the Unit's work presented many problems. As the previous chapters will have shown, there were times when the Unit had not enough men to meet the demands of its work, and others when this position was reversed. The original members were for the most part young men, who, desirous of taking some share in the war, felt specially called to ambulance work because the Quaker principles which most of them inherited did not permit them to enter the combatant forces. These were joined in France by a certain number of doctors, dressers, and others, unconnected for the most part with the Society of Friends, but who found here an excellent opportunity of getting work quickly in the war zone itself. Early in 1915, a serious shortage of man-power showed itself, and about Easter a recruiting tour in England was undertaken by the Adjutant and one of his assistants in order to remedy this. Meetings were held at various towns where Friends were fairly numerous, and statements of the work and the need for workers brought a satisfactory response. With the more important results of the Military Service Acts of 1916 we shall deal later, but it must be mentioned in this connection that they had a notable effect on the growth of numbers available for service, many Friends and others connected with the Society adopting the Unit as a form of alternative service under the provision of the Acts. In fact it was not really until the rush of work, military and civilian, in the closing months of the war that shortage again became imminent, and the end of hostilities arrived before this became really acute.

To meet all possible needs it was necessary to maintain an adequate reserve of men at Headquarters. In the early summer of 1916 an Instructional School

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and Reserve were formed, into which all new members arriving in France were placed. The first home of this body was a derelict café standing on the sea front at Malo-Centre, where it remained until the transference of Headquarters to the Hotel Pyl made it possible to house all under one roof. At Malo-Centre a variety of activities was carried on to pass the time of waiting until men were drafted off to the duties assigned to them, physical training, route marches, instruction in motor-driving and medical subjects. At one time a temporary outlet for the surplus energy bottled up in the Reserve Camp was found in agricultural work, carried on for a few weeks in the country round Bergues, men being lent for service with various farmers who found themselves short-handed about harvest time. But at the Hotel Pyl the reserve was differently employed. There they performed the cooking and various necessary orderly duties for Headquarters, until then carried out by a small staff of local French-women. They worked on these rather thankless tasks under the supervision of the officers responsible for personnel, who were then able to judge in some measure the abilities and qualities of new arrivals, and to draft them on to other functions accordingly. From time to time, when the motor department needed reinforcements, classes were held for prospective drivers, and by the end of the war a large proportion of the Unit drivers were men who had learnt the handling of a car since their arrival in France and had passed the necessary tests.

The Stores Department was an important branch of the Headquarters administration, although its work was not such as lent itself to much description. Under the direction of Brian T. Mennell and his assistants, the provision and distribution of the various general stores needed throughout the Unit were carried on from Malo. Until the summer of 1916 the Stores Department was housed in a building lent by M. Castellain, a prominent townsman of Malo, who was a good friend to the Unit from its early days; but in time it expanded beyond the capacity of this place and was transferred to some large disused premises known as the " Petit Casino," close to the Hotel Pyl. In its rambling halls and cellars large quantities of stores were easily maintained and handled. With the feeding of such sections as the Convoys and ambulance trains, of course, these stores had little to do, but most of the food and equip-ment used in the Queen Alexandra Hospital, the civilian relief sections, the recreation rooms, and the Headquarters themselves, was supplied through this department. This was not an easy undertaking. Most of the goods required came by sea from London and had to be received and brought up from the docks. Perishables were bought as far as possible in the local market, though latterly it was fortunately possible to obtain food supplies for Head-quarters through the Army Service Corps store in Dunkirk. When the recrea-tion rooms were opened, a large increase in stores work resulted, as a supply of the numerous articles sold in their canteens had to be regularly maintained. In order to make for general efficiency, a system of priced invoices was insti-tuted for the distribution of all stores, and by this means a check on the cost of various departments was secured.

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A small but useful branch of the Unit administration was to be found in Boulogne. Since after the spring of 1915 it was no longer possible for men to cross to or from England through Dunkirk, there was a pretty regular flow of men through the port of Boulogne. Moreover, it was the seat of the British Red Cross Society's Headquarters and Stores, with both of which the Unit came to have many dealings, and it was frequently a calling-place for the ambulance trains. A representative of the Unit was accordingly stationed there in the Hotel de France, where he had a small office and rooms for billeting members passing through the town. The formalities of passports were in his hands, and he kept in touch with the B.R.C.S. departments. He was also responsible for the despatch to Headquarters of stores sent out from England under arrangement with the B.R.C.S., connection with Malo being maintained by a daily service of despatch-riders or light lorries. The frequent and speedy communications with London *viâ* Boulogne and Folkestone were of great value for the transit of urgent medical and motor stores, and for the delivery of private parcels to members of the Unit. In 1917 the Hotel de France was taken over by the American Red Cross, who with characteristic liberality provided an office and billeting accommodation for the Unit free of rent.

In the summer of 1916—a period, it will be noticed, of many internal changes—a Works Department was established at Headquarters, under the direction of the Unit's architect. It was responsible for various works of building and construction, great and small. The " Cat and Fiddle " recreation hut was its first large contract, and as the development of work in the Dunkirk area went on apace, it was never without something to construct, alter, or repair. Two large motor hangars were built in 1916 and 1917 respectively, and during the autumn of 1917 the cellars of the Hotel Pyl (by then the Unit's Headquarters) were converted into a large sand-bagged dug-out. When the Queen Alexandra Hospital was removed from Malo to a safer position at Petite Synthe early in 1918, a number of the Works Department's members were stationed at the new site to carry out the necessary structural alterations. But apart from these larger undertakings, there was always a host of smaller works to be done : doors that would not open were opened, windows that would not shut were shut ; roofs and marquees were camouflaged ; and in the large *atelier* lent by M. Castellain all sorts of repairs to equipment were always in hand.

With all this growth of numbers and departments it may be wondered how they were all contained in the original Headquarters at the " Kursaal." During 1916, and especially after the work with the Aide Civile Belge closed down, the numbers stationed at Malo became too large for the Kursaal to hold them, and during the summer a small camp pitched in an open space close by provided sleeping quarters for the overflow. But in September a move was made to the Hotel Pyl, a much larger building capable of holding all the members and nearly all the offices of the Headquarters staff. Although this building was wrecked by bombs two years later, the change was beneficial as making for the easy working of the Headquarters organisation, providing ample room for the billeting and indoor recreation of members, as well as for a

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conveniently-placed set of offices which many an Army Corps staff might have envied.

By this time in the Unit's history, the general conditions under which its members undertook service abroad had changed considerably from those of its earlier months. Before the Unit became a regularised institution, there was little to prevent its members from leaving its service at any moment, except their own sense of duty. Fortunately it can be said that only in a few cases was the enjoyment of this freedom abused. But nevertheless, during the summer of 1916 the general stabilising process in organisation demanded that the conditions of service with the Unit should be set on a more definite basis than hitherto, and, from that time onwards, members were placed on a distinct understanding to serve for a full six months followed by periods of three months. At the same time the agreement made clear not only what obligations the member owed to the Unit, but the reciprocal provisions to be expected of the Unit by the members in its service. In many ways this proved of great value in administration, not least enabling the Unit to undertake work of a permanent nature without the danger of finding itself suddenly short of the necessary personnel. But the agreement did not in any way compromise the voluntary nature of the Unit service. Any member was at liberty to return to England if he desired to do so, and in many cases the strict obligation of three months service was waived, if it was clear that the efficiency of the work would not be impaired.

It will be realised that a great deal depended on the free and willing rendering of service throughout all branches of the Unit. In most of its activities, it was essential for the satisfactory accomplishment of work that compliance with the orders and decision of those in charge should be as habitual and unquestioning as in military units. The surroundings of war demand discipline from all who have to live amid them. But the officers of the Unit, though responsible for its discipline, fortunately found no need to devise any elaborate machinery of punishment to maintain it.

The working of the Unit, in its separate sections and as a whole, had to depend entirely on the good sense and the willing obedience of the individual. From this point of view the Unit presented an interesting aspect; it came to be, one might almost say, a small republic, autonomous within its own boundaries, but in close connection with the powers around it, developing gradually its own system of control and its own code of rules. Now there was more than one kindred body working with the Armies abroad of which this might be said, but the Friends' Ambulance Unit differed from these in at least two important respects; first, that its members were linked together by a peculiar bond, their common belief in certain principles which, unpopular though these were, they claimed to be maintaining by undertaking Red Cross work; and secondly, that their work in the Unit's service was voluntary, not only in the sense that the Unit was an unenlisted formation, but in the sense that its members received no payment. This latter fact gave the Unit a distinctive position, and in any estimate of the difficulties which it had to face deserves consideration.

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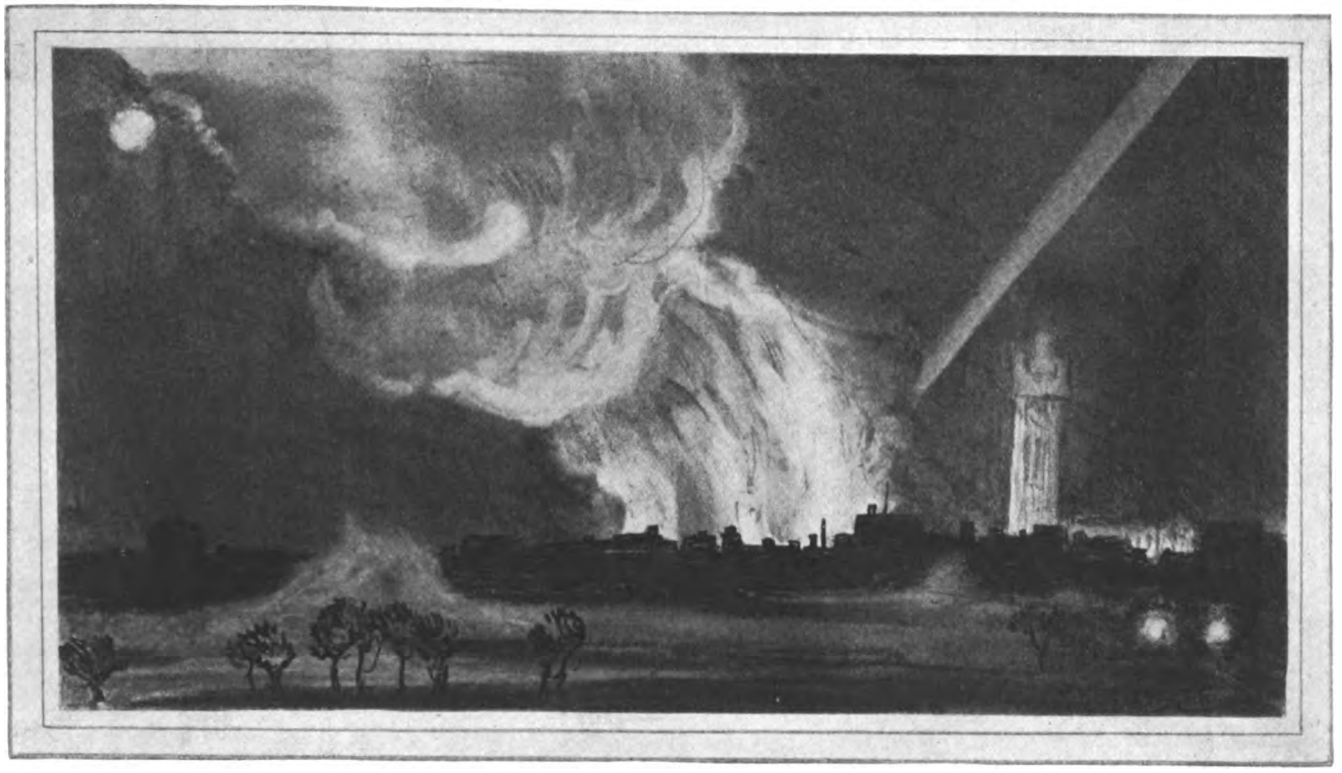

Plate XXVI

AN AIR RAID, DUNKIRK.

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Throughout the whole war, its members at home and abroad were working unpaid, with the exception of a very few whose professional or technical skill in certain directions was indispensable. For the great majority of the men in the Unit this was no small matter. They were drawn from almost every walk of life, and many had left heavy responsibilities at home which grew the heavier as the war went on. It was a sacrifice which they were prepared to make, but there was no attempt to advertise it as such, or to compare it with the sacrifice of others who followed different paths of duty. In fact it may be said that most of those who came only casually into touch with the Unit's work abroad, were unaware of this fact. But there can be no doubt that amongst many who learnt it there was a deeper respect for the Unit than there might otherwise have been. Despite many difficulties, the principle of unpaid service was adhered to throughout. In the case of the French Convoys, where military pay was allotted *ipso facto* to men attached to the French Armies, the money was paid into the Unit's funds. On this feature of service with the Unit it is hardly necessary to enlarge, but it is well that it should be borne in mind by those who would appreciate the motives of its work.

Not unconnected with the general conditions of service in the Unit was a question to which passing references have been made elsewhere in this book. Throughout the gradual expansion of the Unit's work abroad, satisfactory though it was to those responsible to know that full use was being made of its resources in men and material, it was always a matter for regret that the Unit was unable to secure front area medical work with the British Armies in the field. With the French forces, of course, this was undertaken, as the story of the Convoys has shown. But it was often felt that similar work with our own troops would have given a valuable opportunity of showing what was after all one of the primary purposes of the Unit's existence, to prove that its members' disbelief in the principles of war did not mean a desire to avoid the dangers and privations which war involved for their fellow-countrymen. On occasion, as we have seen, sections of the Unit were called upon to face situations of no small danger and periods of considerable hardship. But there were many who would have wished to see more frequent chances of so significant a testimony of their sincerity, especially amongst soldiers of their own blood and their own tongue.

Such opportunities might have been found in varying degrees in the work of regimental stretcher-bearing, in the staffing of field ambulances, or even in the laborious duties of a casualty clearing station. Repeated requests for openings in these directions were made, but unfortunately they did not meet with the approval of the high military authorities before whom they came. There was little tendency to doubt either the sincerity of the desire, or the ability to carry out such duties efficiently. The obstacle was rather a constitutional one; for acceptance of the Unit's offers would have involved a serious complication of administrative work for military authorities concerned. This point of view can readily be understood, but it was none the less a keen disappointment to many of the Unit when nothing resulted from the frequent requests put forward.

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There were indeed occasions when this front area work for the British was undertaken, and much work with civilians was of course done in times of crisis in positions no less trying than those of front area formations. The emergency casualty clearing station at Poperinghe during the Second Battle of Ypres seemed for a moment to have opened the door to what was wanted, but it was of very short duration, and the circumstances of its establishment offered few hopes of a successful continuance of such activities. It was in fact an unfortunate experiment, which perhaps obscured the issue on later occasions when a further attempt might well have proved successful. From time to time during the summer and autumn of 1918, some motor work was successfully undertaken with the divisional Advanced Dressing Stations by the cars of the French Civilian Evacuation Section in the Second Army area. In the neighbourhood of Bailleul and Nieppe, and later at Ypres and Hooge during the last great battles there at the end of September, the Unit drivers were able to work along with those of the Field Ambulances of British divisions. But the military work thus performed was, so to speak, unofficial, and lasted only a few days at a time. The cars and drivers were officially attached to these units to deal with the civilian casualties then expected, and carried battle casualties only when they would otherwise have been standing idle.

There were many serious difficulties of general policy to be faced, side by side with the administrative development of the Unit, during the course of 1916. Foremost amongst these was the situation created by the Military Service Acts of 1916, which both for the Unit as a whole and for its individual members was one of fundamental importance, and merits description in some detail.

By the late summer of 1915 the clouds of conscription were gathering on the horizon, and national registration and the Derby scheme clearly showed which way the wind was blowing. Hitherto the vexed question of conscientious objection had not played a prominent part in the spiritual history of the Unit, simply because the problem in its acute form had not yet arisen. In conception, of course, the Unit was a true offspring of the Society of Friends, but its original constitution included many whose connection with the Society was not much more than a chance acquaintanceship with Friends, or who were animated by a natural desire, in the optimistic days of 1914, to be assured of work actually at the front before the war was over. There was thus in the early days a fair sprinkling of members (many of them medical students) who might easily have joined any other medical Unit which offered them the chance of service in the field, nearly all of whom left during the autumn of 1915. The result was that, except for a certain number who remained because their services were indispensable, the Unit became for the most part composed of those who were prepared to take a definite stand on the question of military service. It is not difficult to see the bearing of this gradual change both on the administration of the Unit and on its relations with the authorities at home and abroad. By the beginning of 1916, if not before, the Friends' Ambulance Unit had ceased to be simply one of the many Red Cross bodies working at the front, and little by little assumed a position somewhat conspicuous

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and certainly unique. From one point of view, indeed, the most remarkable aspect of the Unit's history is that it presented the spectacle of a large independent body of men openly opposed to the principle of military service, who yet remained working in the zone of war for three years after conscription had become universal. That this was possible was due very largely to the tact with which the situation was handled.

The Unit could scarcely have weathered the storm had it not been for certain facts in its past record of service. It had landed in France early in the war, and had certainly won something of a special position for itself by its work during the typhoid epidemic at Ypres. Still more important, perhaps, was the respect in which the Society of Friends was everywhere held, and the wide belief in the genuineness of its convictions. Even many who denied the possibility of a genuine conscientious objection to military service were ready to admit the comparative sincerity of Friends. It was recognised that here was no new attitude created by the passing of the Military Service Acts, or based simply on political materialism, but one founded on the literal interpretation of the central doctrine of Christ. Here in fact was a recognised religious body, whose young men had already done much good work at the front long before they had needed to give up their ordinary vocations. These circumstances gave the Unit a good initial standing with the military authorities abroad, who were thus the more ready to accept the ruling of the home authorities, that the Unit was to be allowed to carry on its activities in France and Belgium, uninterrupted by the operation of the Acts. This favourable decision of the high authorities concerned was in great measure due to the influence of the Committee in London.

Now if the advent of conscription had created a delicate situation in the Unit's relationship with the external authorities, it also brought with it many internal difficulties. It may be said perhaps that the Unit itself became more self-conscious as its position among other organisations became more distinctive. Its members, it is true, were almost without exception men who were willing and anxious to take as great a share as possible in the dangers and hardships of the war, provided only that their objection to purely military duties was respected: it may be recalled how, in the summer of 1916, schemes for undertaking work in the most exposed branch of the military medical service, the regimental stretcher-bearers' parties, were submitted to, but not accepted by, high authorities at G.H.Q. There was no general desire among members to stand aloof from the burdens of their countrymen, who had undertaken or submitted to military service from motives no less sincere than their own. But at the same time feeling existed among many members that the Unit was not only in France to perform certain work, but also as a testimony to freedom of conscience. They felt the Unit to be in principle a living example of democracy set amid the autocratic surroundings of a militarist world. It was not, therefore, surprising that, in its own internal administration, a more democratic system of control was looked for than that which governed life in the Army, a wish which found expression later in a scheme for an elected advisory

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committee, or could be traced in the latent antagonism among certain sections at Headquarters to the distinction of officers and men within the Unit. Altogether then it was a period full of difficulties. What the authorities at Headquarters had to reckon with were, within the Unit itself, a certain restlessness, the beginnings of a desire for more democratic administration, the infusion among the old members of many new ones who would not have joined the Unit had it not been for conscription, and the necessity of undertaking much work which was inherently less interesting than that of earlier days. From without, they had to bear in mind a not unnatural suspicion of those who remained exempt from combatant service on grounds of conscience. And in the spring of 1916, in addition to these difficulties, there came the departure of a small group of men who, after long and valuable work abroad, came then to feel that they must return home to take a more decided stand against conscription than service with the Unit would allow.

Such in outline were the main problems which Leslie Maxwell had to face during his first eighteen months of office. To trace the solution of them is a harder matter; the process was a gradual one, and some indeed were incapable of complete and satisfactory settlement. Nevertheless the fact remains that on his departure at the end of 1917 the position of the Unit was, barring accident or serious mistakes, secured. Good and useful work, though much was necessarily of a routine nature, had been found, and the swelling numbers had been well absorbed. What might easily have been nothing better than tolerance on the part of the Army and British Red Cross authorities, had become respect and even admiration. The insoluble problems were the inevitable outcome of the peculiarity of the Unit's status. Some surrender of democratic ideals there had to be; the Unit could never have been conducted on purely democratic lines in the midst of the military machine. Its leaders were responsible to the Army for the maintenance of discipline and efficiency, and for the observance of the rudiments of military etiquette. It had to retain its independent character, and yet it was dependent for its very existence on its readiness to submit to military requirements. It remained in France in order to do something; there were some who felt that it should remain there chiefly in order to be something. The two ideals were in a sense incompatible, and it was this apparent incompatibility which rendered some of its internal problems incapable of complete solution. In other words, there had to be some compromise; the acceptance of Honorary Commissions by the Officer Commanding and by the Principal Medical Officer, was of the utmost utility for dealings with the authorities, though it caused at first some dissatisfaction within the Unit. The acceptance of Honorary Commissions by the *Chefs-Adjoints* of the French Convoys would have made the administration of these sections considerably easier, but it was not so necessary. It might have caused more dissatisfaction, and the matter was continually being shelved. This is a typical example, unimportant in itself, of the sort of compromise that perpetually had to be effected, in order to preserve the balance between a satisfactory status with external authority on the one hand, and the maintenance of internal principle and content on the other.

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It was exactly here that the administration of Captain Maxwell was so extraordinarily successful. He was trusted and respected in a remarkable degree by all those with whom he had official dealings; he was thoroughly conversant with the intricacies of military procedure, and so organised his administration that there was very little trace of that "amateurishness" that might have been expected in an unenlisted formation. In short, his greatest achievement was that he adapted the Unit to a situation of great difficulty, and established it on a firm basis. Such antagonism from within as this process involved he faced with unfailing tact and courage. Some of it was inevitable; of the remainder much disappeared as the wisdom of his policy became apparent.

It is perhaps necessary here to correct an impression which the last few paragraphs may have given: an impression that the whole of the Unit would have desired more democratic control. That was by no means the case, for the Unit was represented by men of almost every type of thought. At one end of the scale were those who had but imperfect sympathy with the spiritual ideals for which the Unit stood, whose presence in the F.A.U. was more a matter of chance and circumstance than anything else, and who would gladly have seen a more stringent régime. At the other end were those who believed that the Unit ought to be ostentatiously pacifist in its behaviour, to be an active protest against militarism—a class which, fortunately for the Unit's existence, was neither large nor influential. Between these two extremes were men of almost every shade of conviction. The great majority realised that their duty lay in the efficient performance of the work that was undertaken, and in compliance with the requirements of military discipline and etiquette at least sufficient to show the Unit's appreciation of the Army's permission to carry out that work in the war zone. The essentials—freedom from military service and respect of conscience—remained secure, and, as long as that was so, little else mattered but a cheerful performance of duty.

It can easily be imagined that there were many difficulties, and (shall we say?) psychological complications, in the administration of a large organisation such as the Unit, which contained so many various elements in its constitution. To describe them fully would require, perhaps, the pen of a novelist rather than that of the historian. There was, for instance, the vexed question of leave. Within certain limits the scale of leave granted to members lay at the discretion of the Unit's officers, and at its maximum this could have been a very generous allowance. But at least two considerations had to be borne in mind which modified the natural desire to take as much as was sanctioned for members of voluntary organisations. First, it had to be remembered that within the Unit itself some sections, by the conditions of their work (as for example the trains) would have been placed at a disadvantage in this matter; inequality in such matters would not have made for harmony within the Unit. And secondly, it was strongly felt that the members of the Unit should on principle avoid the acceptance of advantages which their voluntary status may have offered them in contrast with the lot of the enlisted soldier. Similar considerations arose in connection with a much less important detail, but one which from time

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to time raised much controversy within the Unit: the adoption of the standard B.R.C.S. service jacket in preference to the open-collared tunic worn by voluntary Red Cross workers in kindred organisations. Some of these problems were important in themselves and demanded the careful consideration which they received; others were important rather as demonstrating the solvent value of a sense of humour. But throughout his tenure of office, during which the Unit had developed almost beyond recognition, Captain Maxwell bore his heavy responsibilities with a steadiness of purpose which put the Unit under a great personal obligation to him. It was not surprising that when, at the end of 1917, he decided reluctantly to return to England to resume his medical studies, interrupted by the outbreak of war, there was a very sincere and spontaneous regret throughout all sections of the Unit. It found some measure of expression in a presentation and an address of farewell, signed by all members serving under him. This took place on the last evening of 1917, and the next morning he made his departure down the familiar road to Boulogne.

The difficulty of choosing a successor to Leslie Maxwell had been no small one, but finally the choice of the Committee fell on Meaburn Tatham, whose selection had been approved by the officers of the Unit in France, efforts having been made to gauge the wishes of all parts of the Unit abroad. Although originally unconnected with the Society of Friends, he had joined the Unit in March, 1915, and after service at the Sacré Cœur, Poperinghe and Caestre he had become the leader of the second Search Party. This work he had had to give up at the end of 1916 owing to ill-health, and had left the Unit to take up sedentary work in England, under the Ministry of National Service. From this department he was released in order to rejoin the Unit, was gazetted temporary honorary Captain, and left for Dunkirk two weeks before Captain Maxwell's departure.

The difficulties which the new O.C. had to face were not perhaps comparable to those which his predecessor had overcome. The Unit's position was established, the broad lines of its policy were securely laid down, and except for the inevitable diminution of work in the winter months the various sections were assured of continuous employment. It had become an institution, and was accepted as such by all authorities. Such problems as existed were of an internal nature, and resulted chiefly from the change of leadership itself. The situation is partly explained by saying that at the end of 1917 the Unit was suffering from the prevalent disease of war-weariness, an epidemic which reached its height after the disappointment of a summer campaign and with the dreary period of comparative stagnation till the next spring. It was remarked earlier that the process of establishing the Unit on a firm basis had created some mistrust on the part of those who expected a more democratic constitution. It was not unnatural that, with the departure of one leader and the arrival of another, a solution of their troubles was looked for. To many it was a disappointment that a new O.C. had not been chosen from among the members of the Society of Friends, though the Committee had several other considerations to take into account. To Meaburn Tatham fell the task of guiding the Unit through the last

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fourteen months of its existence, months which included some of the most strenuous periods of its work, and of carrying out its demobilisation and the general winding up of its affairs. Let us add—in delicate parenthesis—that after his own demobilisation he became jointly responsible for the editorship of the book in which these words appear, and the absence of comment on his administration will be understood.

Foremost among the initial difficulties which lay before the new O.C. was the proposal for an advisory committee, outstanding at Captain Maxwell's departure; and this was the first to be taken up under the new régime. It was the outcome of that desire for more democratic control which sprang naturally from a body with such a composition as the Friends' Ambulance Unit. It resulted from the almost anomalous position of the Unit as a formation, placed within the military machine, yet composed largely of men directly opposed to Army methods and Army traditions. The solution was not a simple one, for the O.C. and his chief officers knew, on the one hand, the measure of their responsibility both to the Committee of the F.A.U. and to the Army authorities for the maintenance of discipline and efficiency, and realised how important it was to avoid anything that would have jeopardised the Unit's position. A false step might easily have demolished the laborious building of the three preceding years, and innovations, however innocuous in essence, might on the surface have appeared dangerous to the ever-watchful eye of the Intelligence. On the other hand it had to be recognised that, quite apart from the few who would always have resented control in any form, there was a large and weighty body of opinion based on the high ideals of the Society of Friends, which earnestly desired such a constitution as would be a better testimony to those ideals, and should at the same time recreate that spirit of unity which had been so nearly lost sight of in the process of disintegration into scattered sections. The proposal for an advisory committee was really an honest and serious attempt to make the Unit, as a whole, a more living example of the beliefs held by the individual members who composed it.

The whole matter was dealt with at Headquarters towards the end of January, 1918, at a meeting at which the O.C., while insisting on the fact that any committees which might be formed must necessarily be advisory in character, and devoid of any powers challenging his and other officers' authority, formulated a scheme for the creation of such committees as individual sections might wish to institute. Nevertheless it had to be laid down that a joint committee representative of all scattered sections throughout the Unit was an impossibility, because of the obvious dangers involved by the strictness of the censorship. At the same time, as a partial remedy for the Unit's lack of cohesion, a better system was devised of circulating throughout the Unit information regarding the doings of all its sections. The result of these deliberations was that a committee was formed at Headquarters, composed of one representative from each of the eight main departments, and four from all stationed at Headquarters, elected by proportional representation. Simultaneously committees were

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also formed in other sections, as at the Queen Alexandra Hospital and one or two of the trains and Convoys.

The experiment was not a complete success, possibly because the main object of the committees, which was to keep the O.C. in close touch with the views and feelings of members of the Unit, was better attained by less formal methods. Much useful work was done, but it was very largely of a domestic nature, the Headquarters Committee especially being chiefly occupied with suggestions and complaints in connection with the arrangements for feeding and billeting. It became in fact very largely an advisory committee to its chairman, the Superintendent of H.Q. billets. It was, moreover, hampered by the frequent changes in its personnel which became necessary as work developed and its members were sent to stations away from Malo. In some degree the scheme did create a sense of responsibility in the individual member and quicken his interest in the Unit's affairs. But it started as a compromise, and that perhaps explained much of its failure to perform all that its supporters had hoped.

There was, however, to be little time for the readjustment of these domestic troubles. The period of hibernation was soon over, and the German offensives of the spring of 1918 created work which gave the Unit little time to think about itself. Early in the year arrangements were completed for the removal of the Queen Alexandra Hospital to a site on the other side of Dunkirk less liable to bombing and shelling. The actual move on March 24th, which is described in the chapter dealing with the hospital, called for the utmost energies both on the part of the hospital staff and of the members of the Works Department. Very shortly afterwards, the sudden and dramatic recrudescence of civilian work, first in the Hazebrouck-Bailleul district, and later in the Poperinghe area, absorbed all the available personnel. Not only did the French and Belgian Civilian Evacuation Sections need every driver and orderly who could be spared, but the Headquarters car department and garages were strained to the full to supply and keep in order the cars and equipment needed. Large quantities of stores were required for civilian relief, and new services for postal communication had to be maintained. All departments in the Dunkirk area were stirred into full activity, and even those not directly affected, such as the recreation rooms, were called upon to supply men for the new sections and had to carry on their normal work with reduced staffs. The Deputy Adjutant, on whom fell the task of supplying personnel, was hard put to it to satisfy the clamorous requests of the heads of the sections. Leave frequently had to be curtailed, and at times stopped altogether. Sections not directly administered from Dunkirk, such as the French Convoys and the trains, were involved in the general activity, and casualties from overwork, sickness, and wounds continually had to be made good.

There came, too, a serious anxiety during April for the safety of Dunkirk itself, as the German advance threatened to sweep through the resistance at Locre and pour down on to the plain. For it was clear that any further Allied retreat at this point must have involved the abandonment of Ypres and the

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Plate XXVII W. MORDEY.

M. TATHAM. Facing p. 192

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whole line from there to the coast. It is probable that a line of defence would have been established in the neighbourhood of St. Omer, and this would either have meant the complete abandonment of Dunkirk, or the flooding of the area round it and the holding of this port as an isolated point. By how slender a thread Dunkirk was held during those weeks the Unit had no means of knowing, though a rough idea of the situation could be obtained, both by obvious inferences from the military position and from the various precautionary measures which were being taken. The anxiety was not of long duration, for it soon became apparent that the German progress had been stayed. But the Unit had time to realise what its unique position in Dunkirk meant to it. Not only would there have been the greatest difficulty in finding a new headquarters in the Pas-de-Calais, which would then have been a very congested area, but it was also extremely doubtful whether the Queen Alexandra Hospital, the recreation rooms, the British Base Convoy and the F.U. Groupement could ever have been re-established elsewhere. The valuable connection with the Navy would have been severed at one blow ; the facilities for the shipment of stores from England and for telephonic communication with London would have disappeared. The Unit was an institution in Dunkirk in the eyes of all the British and French services there quartered. It provided the only British hospital in the district, and the bulk of the ambulance transport for the medical services, both British and French. Headquarters for purely administrative purposes might have been set up in another place, and other work possibly have opened up to take the place of that lost ; but nowhere else could have been found a centre that would be at once a Headquarters, a base, and, since it had considerable numbers of men working close at hand, a reserve dépôt.

We have already seen how marked was the effect of the great German advance in the north on the Unit's civilian activities. On the motor and stores departments this brought great pressure and necessitated the depletion of their staffs. As far as the administration was concerned there was plenty to be done both in and away from Dunkirk. Scarcely had the Queen Alexandra Hospital been established at its new site when arrangements were made to take over the Barge, from which Madame O'Gorman and her staff had withdrawn, and to transfer it from the Bergues Canal to the Pont de Petite Synthe, where it was used until the end of June for French civilian casualties from the Hazebrouck area. Shortly afterwards, at the request of Countess van den Steen, certain Belgian civilian patients were removed from the hospital at Couthove and brought to a safer spot within the grounds of the Queen Alexandra Hospital itself. With the medical authorities of the Second Army, first at Cassel and then at Blendecques, there were many negotiations in connection with the civilian relief sections operating in that Army area, and frequent visits to be paid to these sections in the intervals between journeys to trains and Convoys.

The pressure was gradually relieved as the civilian work grew less, and apart from matters which are mentioned in other chapters, there are no outstanding events at Headquarters to record until August, when the Hotel Pyl was partially destroyed. From early in the war Dunkirk had been the chief target

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of the enemy airmen from the aerodromes near the coast, and had been shelled at fairly regular intervals by long-range guns on land, and occasionally on favourable nights by destroyers from the sea. It was comparatively easy to locate for airmen who had the line of the surf or the Furnes Canal to guide them, and the big harbour and docks must have shown up with great clearness on moonlight nights. Militarily it was of considerable importance, and would doubtless have further developed as a supply base for the Ypres sector if it had been less bombarded. It was the home of several monitors and smaller craft used for mysterious expeditions up the Flanders coast, and it was surrounded by a number of aerodromes which housed the machines used for bombing Bruges and other places of importance behind the German lines. With the development of aviation the menace gradually increased, becoming perhaps most intense during the calm moonlight of September and October, 1917, when the activities of the British Fourth Army gave an additional stimulus to nocturnal expeditions. Dunkirk was never the city in ruins which some accounts that have been published might lead one to expect; but the town and its suburbs suffered severely enough. Dock troops and other military bodies were withdrawn gradually into billets a few miles away, and the civil population tended more and more to depart altogether from the district, or to live a short way outside and come into the town each day for their business. Dunkirk through its sufferings won for itself the *Croix de Guerre*, a distinction which for some time it shared only with the city of Verdun.

Malo itself was not, of course, a principal target, but it received a fair proportion of the shells that fell short of their objective, and bombs were dropped on it from time to time by airmen who had either lost their bearings, or who were prevented by anti-aircraft fire from reaching Dunkirk. It has been recorded elsewhere that the Queen Alexandra Hospital had to be moved to a safer site early in 1918. The Hotel Pyl had been made moderately safe by the raising of a portion of the ground floor and the strengthening of the cellars beneath. During the inevitable air raid which occurred on the calm clear night of August 11th, of the hundred or so members billeted in the Hotel Pyl perhaps four-fifths were in the cellars. It is said that one of our returning airmen was forced to descend on the shore not far away, and that a German bomber, seeing the flare he had lit, let loose a bomb at a venture. If that was so, the shot was a singularly poor one, for it actually fell in the small courtyard outside the Hotel Pyl dining room. The supports of that portion of the building which contained the bedrooms were blown away at the ground-floor level by the explosion, and the whole structure above slowly subsided. The cellars were under the other portion of the building and their power to withstand a direct hit was not put to the test. Of those who had not gone below ground several had marvellous escapes, being able to extricate themselves from the building as it fell, with but minor injuries, the most severe being a broken arm. Two members of the Unit, however, were killed, C. Proctor and F. O. Kitching, the former by the collapse of the structure and the latter by the fall of a brick chimney. It is believed that death was mercifully instantaneous in both cases. The Adjutant, William

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Mordey, remained imprisoned under the huge mass of débris, pinned in a cramped position on his bed and saved only by a beam wedged across a solid piece of furniture. Though unable to move hand or foot he could make himself heard, and ultimately was rescued after three hours' difficult and dangerous work by a fire brigade composed of Belgian soldiers.

Thus ended the Unit's tenure of the Hotel Pyl; what remained of the building was unsafe for habitation. The offices and records were hardly damaged, but a considerable amount of Unit property and private clothing and belongings was destroyed, and though many possessions were unexpectedly rescued as the débris was cleared away, some strange costumes were seen in Malo for the next few days. Thanks to the generosity of the American Red Cross all losses, both of the Unit and of individual members, were made good by that body; and Colonel Van Schaick, by whom the offer was made, by his friendship to the Unit in need gave a further proof that he was its friend in deed.

But fortunately buildings were available to house the offices and men. The spacious kitchen and several wards of the Queen Alexandra Hospital still remained on the old site in the Avenue du Kursaal, that is to say those sheds which could not easily be moved to Petite Synthe. The kitchen was easily adapted to serve as a mess room, while the ward sheds made good sleeping quarters. The two houses, Nos. 9 and 11, Avenue du Kursaal, which had previously served as nurses' billets, and for which the Unit was still paying rent, were converted into the new offices, and were used also for sleeping quarters for the office staff. Work was begun with as little delay as possible on the construction of new dug-outs at the old hospital site, and, despite the loss of the many comforts of the Hotel Pyl and its convenient proximity to the garages, it was not long before a normal existence was resumed.

Little has been said hitherto of the social side of Headquarters life, yet in its way it was a very important one. For a body of men whose work was on the whole regular and tending perhaps towards the monotonous, it was important that social life should be as well organised as possible, without however reducing it to a set programme. Concerts and entertainments were fairly frequent, whether by Unit performers (one remembers especially the "Faullies" troupe), or by the concert parties of Naval or Army units in the district, with whom "exchange" visits were often arranged. During the winter of 1916-17 a number of small classes for instruction in various subjects were for a time carried on in addition to these lighter activities. But early in 1918 social life at the Hotel Pyl received a stimulus from a variety of causes. The arrival in January of H. G. Wood, who had come out to continue the excellent work of Ernest Jones as (if the phrase may pass) an unofficial chaplain to the Unit, led to the resuscitation of lectures and debates. Evening classes in subjects so diverse as modern languages, economics, shorthand, commercial law, electricity, and heredity, were carried on, for the most part under members of the Unit. On Saturday evenings regular entertainments were held, always looked forward to both by members and by many Naval and military neighbours. They were varied by the discovery of new talent, and further by the return from temporary duties at Boulogne

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of the Unit's histrionic expert. The evenings of that winter and early spring offered perhaps a more complete programme of instruction and amusement than any other period in the history of Headquarters, and the completion of the "joy-room" above the newly-fortified cellars of the "Pyl," provided the much-needed accommodation for various forms of recreation. A room was also made above these fortifications for the billiard table, which, to the grief of everyone, had been in disuse during the alterations. To many of these winter-time attractions however the sudden increase of civilian work in April, with its consequent moving of personnel, brought dislocation, though many of them managed to survive despite a dwindling attendance, and were revived in the following autumn.

But the events of the late summer and the autumn were not to leave much time on the hands of members at Headquarters. The German retreat in the Kemmel-Bailleul area, followed by the more hasty withdrawal before the Allied attacks beyond Ypres at the end of September, revived the activities of the French and Belgian Civilian Relief Sections to a pitch equal to that of the spring. Once again the Unit's resources in men, cars and material were strained to the utmost and there was a heavy drain on Headquarters. Hospitals sprang up with mushroom growth at Poperinghe, Hazebrouck, Tourcoing, and Courtrai, and detachments of ambulances pushed forward with the advancing Armies, to deal with the civilian sick and wounded as new belts of country came for the first time within the range of battle. For the work of administration and supply, difficulties increased as communications with Malo lengthened, and at the end of October it seemed advisable to move the garages and the bulk of the offices to Courtrai, leaving Dunkirk as a base of supply only. Some of the garage staff and equipment was actually sent forward to that town, but the remainder of the plan was not put into operation, thanks to the intervention of the Armistice and the consequent need for using Dunkirk as a demobilisation centre. Throughout this period the work of all the Unit's hospitals was increased, and the strength of the staffs was decreased by the serious influenza epidemic.

With that dramatic suddenness which all the world knows, the war rapidly reached its climax. The fourth anniversary celebrations were held on October 31st in an atmosphere of suppressed excitement, and, almost before it could be realised, the raw damp air of Dunkirk on that memorable morning of November 11th vibrated with the shriekings of every factory hooter and every ship's siren. Above all other sounds throbbed the deep note of the famous "Cow," celebrating the end of the destruction of which it had so faithfully given warning to the inhabitants of Dunkirk.

At the time of the Armistice all sections of the Unit were hard at work, and remained so for some time after the cessation of hostilities. Though the flow of wounded and gassed civilians ceased, the Courtrai hospital was fully occupied with the sick, and the relief sections were busy with the distribution of relief and the return of refugees. The French Convoys were continually on the move with their divisions, and the ambulance trains were making long journeys over new routes.

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Plate XXVIII
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HEADQUARTERS AFTER BOMBING.

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Demobilisation was no easy matter, though for more than one reason it was urgent. It was important to release without undue delay those who were feeling the financial strain, and it would have been difficult to continue to raise subscriptions in England for the support of the Unit after the war was virtually over. The main *raison d'être* of an ambulance unit had fortunately passed, but much of the work could not be put down till it had been properly completed and wound up. It was essential that the Unit should not leave France with any obligation unfulfilled.

In the case of the Queen Alexandra Hospital the situation was made easier by the arrival of No. 8 Canadian Stationary Hospital in the district. The admission of British military patients to Petite Synthe ceased accordingly on December 7th, that of British Naval cases a fortnight later. French patients were by that time so few that they could easily be accommodated in the large hospitals in the town, and on the last day of 1918 this hospital, perhaps one of the most interesting and comprehensive in France, was closed down after nearly four years' existence. As we have seen elsewhere, the civilian hospitals and relief organisations were gradually handed over to the Belgians as soon as they were in a position to take charge, the process being completed by the end of January, 1919. Demobilisation was carried out as far as possible on the system of releasing first those who had the most urgent claims on domestic or financial grounds. In the case of the French Convoys and the ambulance trains there were certain delays and disappointments involving repeated negotiations with Headquarters, but finally they were all released during the last days of January and the first days of February. The F.U. Groupement was released on January 15th, the British Base Convoy on February 4th. The recreation room at the Seamen's Institute was handed back to that body, the St. Pol Hut was given to the Scottish Churches organisation, and the Mardyck Hut was run by a few demobilised members of the Unit until it was taken over early in April by the Y.M.C.A.

There remained a considerable amount of work in clearing up the various Unit properties and the disposal of stores. The Queen Alexandra Hospital sheds at Petite Synthe were sold to the owner of the house in whose grounds they stood, and subsequently were sent to house labourers engaged on reconstruction in Arras. The old hospital sheds at Malo, together with sundry equipment and stores, were sold to a contractor who disposed of them in the Armentières region. The bulk of the medical stores and equipment was given for the use of Belgian hospitals in Poperinghe, Courtrai, and Tournai, and for the use of a new hospital to arise at some future date from the ruins of Ypres. The Unit has thus left some lasting token of its civilian hospital work in the towns at which it was chiefly carried on. Headquarters were finally closed on March 4th, 1919, and the last members of the Unit left France within the next few days.

But they left behind them a party of about thirty men, headed by the Adjutant, who were transferred to the American Red Cross. This was a fitting ending to the Unit's connection with this great organisation, with which it had

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been brought into close touch by the recrudescence of civilian work in the early spring of 1918. An attempt was made in the concluding paragraph of the chapter dealing with that work to express the Unit's debt of gratitude to Colonel Bicknell and Colonel Van Schaick, for their assistance and advice in the furtherance of those activities throughout the war. Here, where we are concerned only with the life at Headquarters and the administration of the Unit, let it suffice to say that in their welcome visits to Malo they displayed a keen and lively interest not only in that work with which they were officially concerned, but in all that was being done in other directions. They made many friendships among members of the Unit, and had a real understanding of its ideals. Generous financial assistance was given, quite apart from the maintenance of the civilian relief and hospital sections, in cases where the Unit was put to expense by circumstances over which it had no control. The cost of the moving of the Queen Alexandra Hospital and its upkeep at Petite Synthe was borne by the American Red Cross, and, as we saw, the losses sustained through the destruction of the Hotel Pyl were made good. Help was forthcoming in this last year of the Unit's existence just when and where it was most needed. The F.A.U. owes it to Colonel Bicknell and Colonel Van Schaick that in all the new and costly undertakings of 1918, it was relieved from financial worry, and at the same time received the most valuable encouragement and sympathy.

In these pages, we may hope, some idea has been given of the general characteristics and the peculiar difficulties of the Unit's administration, under its three successive leaders. Most of the work carried on at Malo was decidedly uninspiring, however necessary it may have been, and it was not such as lends itself to easy description. It was this fact perhaps which tended to raise many difficulties of administration at Headquarters which scarcely showed themselves in other sections of the Unit. There were many who would willingly have seized any opportunity of finding work more interesting or more adventurous in the Unit's other branches, but were restrained from doing so only by a sense of duty to the organisation as a whole, or by the fact that their individual skill, perhaps as mechanics, perhaps in administration, was indispensable to the central establishment at Malo. To all such the Unit owed a heavy debt indeed.

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CHAPTER IX

THE HOSPITAL SHIPS.

BESIDES its widespread work in France and Belgium, and its scattered branches in England, the Friends' Ambulance Unit was also represented for a time at sea, both in the English Channel and in the Mediterranean. Although the work of the two hospital ships *Western Australia* and *Glenart Castle* was not administered from the Unit's Headquarters at Dunkirk, but was controlled directly by the Chairman of the Committee in London, it naturally takes its place in this record under the Foreign Service section. It was directed from England because the hospital ship service was itself controlled by military authorities there, so that all negotiations were carried on from that side, and, apart from help in the provision of personnel, the Foreign Section of the Unit was not immediately concerned.

So far as the Unit's share in this service went, the hospital ships may be regarded as a seafaring edition of the ambulance trains, whose work we have already described. That is to say, the Unit provided the staff of orderlies and non-commissioned officers (with the exception of a R.A.M.C. sergeant-major) under R.A.M.C. doctors and nursing sisters. And the analogy is sound also in the nature of the duties performed—in the transport of the sick and wounded from various theatres of war and all that such work involved. In fact, in the case of the cross-Channel service, the ships were practically continuing a process begun by the trains. On several occasions, indeed, chance brought one or other of the Unit's trains alongside one of the Unit's ships at the French ports, and patients were transferred from the care of one branch of the Unit to that of another.

The story of the life and work on board these two ships is given below from accounts supplied by members of their respective staffs. Here it will suffice to give an outline of the circumstances which led the Unit to undertake, and later to relinquish, the work. The first move came from the War Office in February, 1916, when a request was sent to Sir George Newman that the requisite number of orderlies and a dispenser should be supplied for work on the *Western Australia*. The men were got together, and after some training at Jordans Camp, joined the ship at the Victoria Docks towards the end of March. On August 10th of the same year a further request came from the War Office for a second hospital ship staff, to serve on board the *Glenart Castle*, and by September 1st the 40 men required were on board.

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Crofton E. Gane (later *Chef-Adjoint* of S.S.A. 19) was the leader of the Unit's personnel on the *Western Australia*, and Victor Alexander, who had served at Woesten and Ypres in the early days of the Unit, held a corresponding position on the *Glenart Castle*.

Early in 1917 the Government was earnestly considering what measures should be taken in view of the repeated torpedoing of hospital ships by the Germans. Such precautions as the carrying of German officer prisoners on board and convoying by armed escort were being discussed, but in any case it seemed certain that in the near future the ships would be removed from the ægis of the Red Cross, and even be used on occasion for the transport of men and munitions when not engaged in carrying patients. Such a development raised obvious difficulties, and after some correspondence between the Chairman of the F.A.U. and the War Office, it became clear that there was no alternative but to withdraw the Unit personnel. Those serving on the *Glenart Castle* were disbanded shortly after the accident to that ship on March 1st, 1917, and those on the *Western Australia* on May 12th.

After the release of the personnel the War Office offered to accept from the Unit the staff of a General Hospital (204 non-commissioned officers and men) for service in the East. Many of those disbanded were, however, quickly absorbed in the various sections in France and at home, and at the time there were not more than 50 men available, all of whom would be needed in the near future for work already undertaken. The acceptance of the offer would have meant the closing down of large sections which were already usefully employed, and the offer had to be declined.

The Western Australia.

The staff for the hospital ship *Western Australia* was drawn from the Unit's training camp at Jordans, and from the hospital at York. For all of them the experience was to be quite a new one, and, as can readily be imagined, presented itself to them as a voyage into an unexplored region. For life on board a hospital ship was likely to be very different from the uniform round of duties in the stable surroundings of a hospital, and no less so from the training at Jordans, which was designed to fit men principally for duties with the Unit in France. But on the whole they found that their new life was less of a leap in the dark than they may at first have pictured it.

The staff, numbering thirty men in all, joined the *Western Australia* at the Victoria Docks, London, on the evening of March 21st, 1916. Their living quarters they found were in the stern of the boat under the poop deck, not improved by the noisy hauling apparatus which was set in operation every time the ship left or entered port, and which by its vibrations would sadly disarrange all the contents of tables and shelves. The *Western Australia*, a ship of 6,000 tons, had had a varied career before her latest phase, having originally been on the Australian coastal trade, carrying cattle and a few passengers: the men's quarters were the old second-class cabins and saloon. She had had a previous

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taste of active warfare, for as a staff-boat in the Russian Navy she had run the blockade at Port Arthur, had later been captured by the Japanese, and then sold back to the Austrian firm which built her. A long narrow room, entered by two doors from the main deck, with a couple of long tables, served as the mess-room, and at the end of this were two small rooms used respectively as a pantry and as a combined serving-room and library. The sleeping quarters consisted of a number of cabins connected with the mess-room, each containing from two to six bunks. They were small, but comfortably fitted, and a system of steam-heating was a great advantage during cold weather at sea. For "exercise" there was the poop deck and some ten or fifteen yards of deck space on port and starboard sides.

Work on board the ship began with some general instructions from the R.A.M.C. sergeant-major who remained with the new staff, bedding was issued, and preparations begun for making the 305 beds of the ship ready for use. From the Royal Albert Docks, the boat sailed to Southampton, the chief incident of this first voyage being a collision off Folkestone. But as all the damage was sustained by the other ship, there was no interruption to the work of the orderlies, and by the time Southampton was entered, the wards were all cleaned and ready to receive patients. But it was three weeks before the first real voyage was made. This was the first of many trips to Le Hâvre, where the new staff received on board their first load of patients. After this trip and subsequent coaling operations, it was found that certain repairs were necessary, and this kept the ship in dock at Southampton for about five weeks. Once these were completed, however, runs were frequent and regular. Southampton was always the home port, the French bases called at being Le Hâvre, Rouen, or Boulogne.

Of the actual work with patients there is not much to be said. In its main features it was straightforward enough, though it did not by any means give the sisters or orderlies in the wards an easy time during the passage. At the appointed time, the motor ambulances, a detachment of Permanent Base stretcher-bearers, and perhaps a sprinkling of interested spectators, would appear on the quayside. The bearers unloaded the cars and brought the stretcher cases on board; walking cases for the most part came down the gangways without much assistance being needed. Each man's "medical card" was examined on deck and a ward assigned to him, to which he was lowered on a "cot-lift." Arrived in the proper ward the orderly in charge decided which bed he was to have and there he was installed. Except during patients' meal-times, when all orderlies were needed on duty, it usually was arranged that they worked on the wards in alternate shifts of two hours' duration. Their duties, save in exceptional cases, were of the type usually allotted to the hospital orderly, though latterly, when owing to increased submarine activity no nursing sisters were carried, the orderlies did all the surgical dressings in their wards. When patients were on board all night, as usually was the case, a roster of night orderlies was always in operation. During the voyage the "nominal roll" so familiar in all military procedure had to be compiled, and this engaged the energies

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of the office staff, while the stores and kitchen were no less fully occupied with their important functions. At the home port, unloading also was performed by a shore staff, and, this process completed, the work of setting the wards in order again was begun.

During the Unit staff's life on board the *Western* (as she was familiarly referred to), the average number of trips made was about one a week, each trip lasting two or three days in all. The staff was in one way fortunate that the shallow draught of their ship enabled it to undertake the river trip from Rouen. The five or six hours spent in coming downstream from Rouen to Le Hâvre left time to make patients comfortable and to feed them before reaching the open sea. In the earlier days especially, no one relished the prospect of going straight out into a rough sea from Boulogne or Le Hâvre ; many were sometimes quite incapacitated, and few felt particularly happy.

Outside working hours the staff found themselves with a good measure of spare time. When they were alongside at Southampton, very generous shore leave was granted, and there were plenty of opportunities of passing the time there. The cordial hospitality of Southampton Friends was much appreciated. A football team was successfully carried on, and played many matches with the teams of other ships and various Army units stationed there. On occasion the staff had several days in Rouen, when that port was closed owing to the presence of enemy submarines off Le Hâvre, and shore leave at the latter town and at Boulogne was frequently possible. Sometimes when there was no room for berthing the ship in Southampton itself, she would be sent to anchor in Southampton Water off Netley, or in Cowes Roads. In the latter instance it was possible to spend a few hours ashore on the Isle of Wight, but off Netley shore leave was almost impossible, and men had to fall back on all kinds of amusements on board.

Life on board ship was, of course, never entirely lacking in incident, and, as in all small communities, rumour and gossip throve well. On two occasions the *Western Australia* was in collision, but both times she suffered little damage. On another occasion, in St. Helens Bay, she lost all the boats and davits on the port side by running into the anchor cables of another vessel. Near the same place she ran aground once, but succeeded in getting off again unaided. Off Le Hâvre one morning, at the comfortless hour of two o'clock, she fouled the submarine net outside the harbour, and everyone had an unpleasant hour shivering on deck, while getting free from the entanglement, till they were assured that they were not actually on the minefield. Mines, of course, provided various lesser excitements, but the worst was the occasion on which the ship *Salta*, following five or ten minutes behind the *Western Australia* into Le Hâvre, was mined and sunk within seven or ten minutes in full view of all, while two other craft standing by to give assistance suffered the same fate. Submarines caused many discomforts indirectly, though probably none were ever actually sighted from the ship. They were nevertheless responsible for numerous boat-drills, and perhaps many misgivings as well. After some time, on their account, no one was allowed to go to bed whilst the ship was crossing the Channel.

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With the R.A.M.C. officers and sergeant-major who were on board, as well as with the Army nursing sisters, relations were easy and friendly, as they were also with members of the ship's crew. To them, and to the senior N.C.O. of the Unit's staff, Crofton E. Gane, the smooth working of the *Western Australia* owed much. It was with some regret, therefore, that the members of the staff left the ship in May, 1917, when the Government found itself obliged to place the hospital ship service on a different footing from other branches of medical service.

But all the men felt that, if there had been many petty discomforts and some wearisome days of idleness, much had been accomplished that was worth doing. Since March, 1916, 64 cross-Channel trips had been made, on which a total number of 21,894 patients had been successfully brought over to England.

The Glenart Castle.

The S.S. *Glenart Castle*—previous to the war the S.S. *Galician*—of the Union Castle Line, was a ship of 6,700 tons. Early in the war she was captured by the Germans, and later had been in commission as a hospital ship during the attack on the Dardanelles, but recently had been dismantled to bring home a valuable cargo from the East. She was manned by a crew of upwards of one hundred men employed by the Union Castle Company. Her hospital equipment—very hurriedly fitted up before the Unit men joined her—included seven casualty wards, a special mental ward with padded cells attached, and a few separate cabins for invalid sisters or special cases, a total accommodation of 461 beds.

The medical staff consisted of six doctors, two chaplains (in the Mediterranean only), and a R.A.M.C. sergeant-major, thirteen nurses and forty F.A.U. orderlies. One third of these last had previously seen service with the Unit, and the others came from "J.8" camp at Jordans, whence they were taken before their training was fully completed.

All the orderly work for the wards was done by 24 men: three were occupied in the hospital stores, two in the dispensary, three in the office, two in sanitary work, three in the men's living quarters, one in the disinfecting room, one in the packstore, and one to assist the sergeant-major in general supervision.

The ship's itinerary during the Unit staff's service on her was as follows:—London, Salonika, Stavros, Salonika, Malta, Salonika, Malta, Mudros, Salonika, Malta, Mudros, Gibraltar, Southampton. Between Le Hâvre and Southampton nineteen cross-Channel voyages were made after returning from the Mediterranean.

The voyage out was uneventful and prosperous. The ship sailed from the East India Docks on September 2nd, carrying a number of Army nursing sisters, the Northumbrian (Territorial) Field Ambulance, a fine body of men of whom most had been training for two years in England, and also a large

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consignment of medical stores for Salonika. The orderlies occupied fairly satisfactory quarters in the fore part of the ship, with new port holes about ten feet above the water line. The bunks were comfortable, the food plentiful if coarse. The new staff mixed pleasantly with the Northumbrians, a few of whom attended their meetings for worship, although for some days they found themselves confronted by unfamiliar seafaring or military terms and customs, by which they were alternately amused and perplexed. There were daily parades and inspections, but as most of the wards were being occupied by the Northumbrians it was impossible to fit up the hospital, and there was ample time for real enjoyment of the glorious weather and the impressive scenery of the route.

After they had bidden good-bye to these passengers, work in the Mediterranean was pretty constant and heavy. While embarking or discharging patients the men had a great deal of stretcher-bearing; during the runs there were the patients to attend to; after the voyage there was cleaning and scrubbing for a couple of days. With sick and wounded aboard the hours were 7.30-7.30. The day orderlies had intervals for dinner and tea, but as they were obliged to get breakfast and have their bunks tidy before going on duty, this meant ten and a half hours of actual work. The night orderlies were not permitted a separate arrangement for meals, and had only two quarter-hour breaks for light refreshment, thus putting in over eleven hours of duty.

On the cross-Channel service the work was somewhat less arduous. The stretcher-bearing was done by the Army, though the hand-power lifts, which enabled stretchers to be taken direct between the deck and the wards, had still to be manned. But on these short runs there was naturally no carrying of convalescents on stretchers to the upper or promenade deck. The hours also were different. Actually they were on duty from 7.30 a.m. to 7.30 p.m., and in addition each orderly did four hours during the night. But the voyages —except in very rough or foggy weather—never exceeded twenty-four hours. Moreover the wards could be cleaned more quickly after a short occupation, and at any rate the outward crossing was made without patients.

The work in the wards was not in itself of a specially interesting nature. In the Mediterranean the wounded were not numerous and dressings proportionately few, but the great numbers of patients in the larger wards made it difficult for the orderlies to establish personal relationship with them. In the Channel a large proportion were wounded men, and though there were no operations there was a good deal of dressing to be done. But the main business was of course to get them over, and as equally careful returns of the particulars of cases were as necessary as before, the office staff was actively employed the whole time patients were aboard. The constant changing of patients also increased the work in the stores, where the orderlies were particularly busy after disembarkation, sorting and counting dirty linen and arranging for supplies of clean from the various Admiralty and War Office storehouses. On the other hand the duties of the two dispensers were less exacting than in the Mediterranean where, besides the treatment of the minor ailments of quite a little clientele

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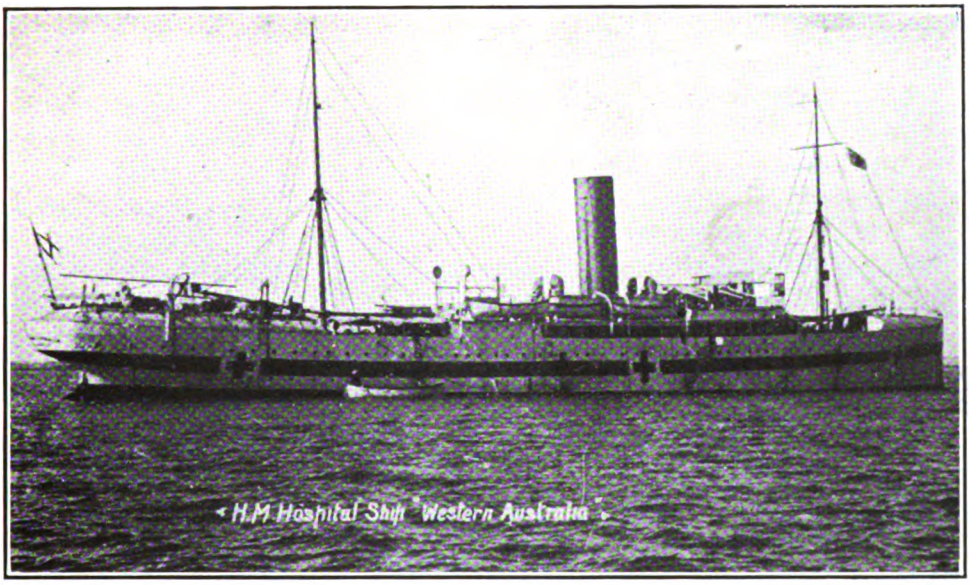
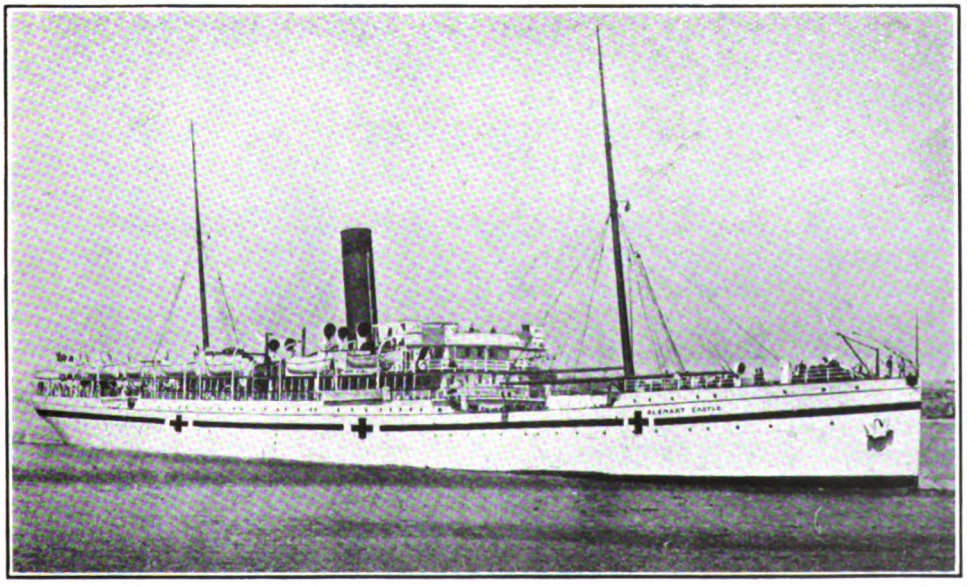


Plate XXIX HOSPITAL SHIP "WESTERN AUSTRALIA."



HOSPITAL SHIP "GLENART CASTLE." Facing p. 204

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from among the crew, the patients themselves were under medical treatment for a much longer period. Men were always liable, of course, to emergency work resulting from distress at sea, as when they were called out to receive the survivors of the torpedoed S.S. *Welsh Prince*, whose crew had been in open boats for many hours before being picked up.

At Stavros began the hardest work, where on September 21st the *Glenart* became a clearing hospital. The ship was anchored in a beautiful little bay, set round by steep cliffs which were clothed with grass and shrubs right down to the water's edge. But owing to the unhealthy climate men were not allowed ashore, but lay off the island, in sight of the canvas marquees of the clearing station from which the ship received about twice a day lighters packed with sick and wounded. These men were suffering chiefly from malaria and dysentery. They had found the conditions far worse than in France; their clothes were badly worn, lice-infested and caked with mud. Most of them were aboard only a few days and were bitterly disappointed at being sent ashore again. Owing to continual changing of bedding, disinfecting of clothing, washing of patients and cleaning of wards, the orderlies never undertook heavier work than in caring for these men.

At Salonika the harbour was dominated by the warships of the Allies. The town was controlled by the French, and in the streets were to be met soldiers of many nations, Greeks, French, British, Italians, Russians, and Serbians, and among the civilian population numbers of Turks and Jews. Some Venezelist troops, after trying to beleaguer others of their compatriots favourable to the Central Powers, had been taken into custody by the French, and were thus in durance in their own country at the direction of a foreign power!

Malta was a favourite port. Mails were picked up there, always after a long interval without correspondence. Moreover the discharging of wounded was there most rapidly done; though it was hard enough work for an hour and a half under the hot sun. There was also the interest of the Governor's visits, as Lord Methuen made a point of inspecting personally almost every hospital ship on her arrival. The island itself was full of interest and the staff made several friends there. Two occasions were particularly memorable. One, when they spent several days in the auxiliary harbour at Gliema, bathing from the ship on sweltering November mornings, enjoying excursions inland, concerts, meals off tablecloths in the restaurants of Valetta, faring often in the Maltese dghaizas (gondolas) or carozzins (fiacres); the other when they received temporarily the survivors of the R.M.S. *Arabia*, and had aboard in the grand harbour many interesting civil and military personages, and a large number of munition workers from Australia.

Mudros appeared nearly deserted, and there was practically no longer any hospital work going forward there. It was while waiting here with a full complement of convalescent soldiers for the arrival of the *Britannic* that news came of her fate. She was too large to enter even the grand harbour at Malta, and seven hospital ships had to steam three days out from Mudros to meet her, in order that she might receive her human freight and proceed back to England.

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On Tuesday morning, November 21st, two hostile aircraft appeared and were engaged by the guns of British cruisers. It shortly became known that the great ship had gone down the day before, and in consequence orders were received to sail for Malta. A storm prevented putting in there, and the voyage was continued to Gibraltar, and so home to Southampton. For once the men had a real chance of getting to know their charges, as altogether they were on board for three weeks.

The base for the ship's cross-Channel service was Southampton. Unfortunately the Mediterranean boats on this service were not allowed to lie long at the quayside, as was the *Western Australia* for example. At Le Hâvre there was practically no opportunity of going ashore. The *Western Australia* only took up her position alongside the quay on its being vacated by the hospital ship ahead of her in the rota, and seldom had to wait many hours before the arrival of a train. There were opportunities for meeting several times, for a few minutes, the orderlies from Nos. 11 and 16 Ambulance Trains, and it was No. 16 which on March 1st brought down the wounded carried on the ship's last crossing, the details of which, extracted from a report made a few days afterwards, follow.

"On the night of Thursday, March 1st, 1917, the *Glenart Castle* was returning from Le Hâvre to Southampton with 530 wounded and sick men on board. During the early part of the afternoon she had taken on these men from No. 16 Ambulance Train and had left the quay about 3.30 p.m. The ship had on board no officer patients, no Germans, no mental cases, but in all about seventy more than her complement of patients. All orderlies were in their wards, one in each ward on duty and the others sleeping in their clothes.

"At 11.40 p.m. she was struck, when about six miles south of the Nab off the Isle of Wight, by a torpedo or mine right aft under the wheel-house. All electric lights went off at once, the wireless apparatus collapsed, and as both propellers were carried away the ship soon began to drift. In the wards a number of patients were thrown from their beds, and some of the hurricane lamps were put out by the shock. A staircase that had connected "E" and "F" wards was thrown down, and one orderly was jerked down the opening and sustained bruises to his back.

"The ship remained steady except for a slight and slowly-increasing list to starboard, and on the bridge the Captain gave repeated long blasts from the syren. The patients who could do so soon scrambled on to the decks, and the orderlies worked strenuously and patiently to bring up the helpless men, so that there was no panic. The darkness and the uncertainty of the first minutes were naturally a strain on untried men, but as each knew his duties the great need for speed and for strength occupied the energies of all. The lance-corporal in the officers' ward (where there were nearly 60 patients, some of them very severely wounded), carried several men up the narrow stairway on to the deck. The lance-corporal in "D" ward saw that all the men under him were at their respective duties, some closing port-holes, one at the stairway, another closing the bulk head, and others helping patients, and then he stood on a table telling

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patients to pick up their life belts but not to put them on until they reached the deck. The corporal in the office and an orderly, after escorting patients to the T.B.D. *Wizard*, returned in the lifeboat to the *Glenart* for more. These incidents are mentioned not as being heroic, nor even as denoting any superiority in the conduct of these men to that of others, but merely to show that the proper spirit was in the men, and that if heroism of the spectacular sort had been wanted there would have been no lack of self-sacrifice.

"About ten minutes after the explosion (which killed no one) the T.B.D. *Wizard* came close up, and the play of her searchlight on the crowded hundreds in the after well-deck and on the promenade deck, did a great deal to restore confidence. This destroyer took altogether over 300 of our wounded, most of the nurses and seven of our forty orderlies, who were meanwhile fully occupied in attending to their patients.

"There were also two or three other ships, probably trawlers, which came alongside and took off the wounded. Most of the orderlies went on to two of these (the *Magnet III* and the *Pitblae*) at about 12.50, when all the patients were off the *Glenart*. Major Home, R.A.M.C., the leader of the Unit staff, and the dispenser were the last of the hospital staff to leave the ship, and their lifeboat with several others was picked up by a transport. On board with them were rather more than 50 patients, about the same number of the crew, two nurses and Sergeant-Major Platt, R.A.M.C., with five others of our orderlies. They arrived in Southampton about 9 a.m.

"The Captain of the ship, with his officers, boatswain, and two or three of the crew remained aboard. One lifeboat stood by near the bottom of the accommodation ladder in case of further emergency, but eventually it was found possible to tow the crippled ship into Southampton."

It was evident that the ship would be in dry dock for a considerable time to come, and on March 10th the Unit staff was disbanded. Thus ended their connection with the *Glenart Castle*. During the three months of Mediterranean service some 3,000 patients had been carried, and another 8,000 in the nineteen trips across the Channel. The general health of the men had been good, though some suffered from seasickness and from the exacting nature of the work, especially in the foul atmosphere of crowded wards during the hot weather. One member had rather a severe attack of dysentery at Salonika, but made a sound recovery and was able to remain at work in the Channel. A few were found unsuited to the climate or to the sea, and substitutes had to take their places on returning to England. There was no opportunity in the Mediterranean for regular recreation beyond the memorable shore leave at Malta. But members of the staff were able to help the chaplains to arrange concerts for the wounded.

Relations with all the authorities on board, which were always friendly, steadily improved, and became of a really cordial nature on the Channel runs. Occasionally some conflict with the military system arose, which was perhaps inevitable, but on the whole things went remarkably smoothly, and it was with

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genuine regret that the men bade farewell to the ship that had been their home for six months.

The experience had been of comparatively short duration, but for the Unit it was one of particular interest in that it provided the only occasion on which its members served in a theatre of war more distant than the Western front. At the risk of over-emphasising a slender coincidence it is perhaps worth while recalling in conclusion that in 1914, when the Unit was in the course of formation, a scheme had been launched for service in Serbia. Events, as we have seen, took the pioneers not to the Balkans but to Flanders. But though the original scheme was thus never realised, two years later members of the Unit were carried by the *Glenart Castle* to that base from which operations were being conducted which led in the end to Serbia's liberation. It was but a momentary contact with the war in the Near East, and by no means the sort of connection that had once been envisaged. Nevertheless the contact, however slight it may have been, was established, and the Unit was glad to have had the opportunity of a widened field of service which was afforded by this voyage of forty of its members to the Mediterranean.

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APPENDIX "A"

STATISTICS.

SECTION I. CIVILIAN HOSPITALS AND RELIEF WORK.

THE SACRE CŒUR HOSPITAL, YPRES.

Surgical cases admitted, December 1st, 1914 to April 17th, 1915	230
*Contagious cases admitted, January 6th, 1915 to April 17th, 1915	477
TOTAL	707

*Mostly typhoid cases.

HAZEBROUCK HOSPITAL, LATER THE BARGE HOSPITAL AT WATTEN AND BERGUES.

	Civilian Cases.
Hazebrouck, May 9th, 1915 to July 25th, 1915	139
Watten, July 25th, 1915 to September 25th, 1915	73
Bergues, September 26th, 1915 to January 29th, 1917	143
TOTAL	355

ANTI-TYPHOID INOCULATIONS MADE IN YPRES-POPERINGHE DISTRICT.

			1st Inoculations.	2nd Inoculations.	Total Inoculations.
[A]	1915.	February 5th–28th ..	4890	2649 (54%)	7539
		March 1st–31st ..	4942	4576 (90%)	9518
		April 1st–10th	1010	972 (96%)	1982
			10842	8197 (76%)	19039
[B]	1915.	Totals to end of July ..	14,836	11,375 (77%)	26,211

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MONTHLY ADMISSIONS TO CHATEAU ELISABETH HOSPITAL, POPERINGHE.

January 21st, 1915—May 6th, 1916.

		Typhoid.		Other Sick.		Wounded.		Totals.	
		Admitted.	Died.	Admitted.	Died.	Admitted.	Died.	Admitted.	Died.
1915	January	78	15	—	—	—	—	78	15
	February.	133	25	—	—	—	—	133	25
	March	194	25	—	—	—	—	194	25
	April	137	13	—	—	57	—	194	13
	May	19	1	39	6	31	2	89	9
	June	15	—	30	4	8	1	53	5
	July	25	5	35	2	18	3	78	10
	August	12	1	26	1	7	2	45	4
	September	5	—	31	2	8	1	44	3
	October	—	—	20	—	9	—	29	—
	November	—	—	23	3	29	5	52	8
	December	—	—	41	—	29	6	70	6
1916	January	—	—	17	2	12	—	29	2
	February	—	—	35	3	11	—	46	3
	March	—	—	26	3	22	1	48	4
	April—May 6th	—	—	37	2	35	3	72	5
	Totals	618	85	360	28	276	24	1254	137

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NUMBERS OF OUT-PATIENTS AND VISITS.

Ypres. December, 1914 to April 23rd, 1915 :—

Out-patients at Ste. Marie Convent	1500
Out-patients at Sacré Cœur	300
Visits to patients in homes	2700
Augustine Straat Dressing Station	82
	4,582

Vlamertinghe, Dickebusch, Woesten and Romarin. May 30th to December 21st, 1915 .. 1,894

NUMBER OF PATIENTS TREATED AT MILK STATIONS.

July, 1915 to May, 1916 :—

Children	2300
Adults	2000
	4,300
GRAND TOTAL OF CIVILIAN OUT-PATIENTS	10,776

PURIFIED WATER FOR YPRES : JANUARY—APRIL, 1915.

81 days	January 31st to February 28th	236,660	gallons.
	March 1st to March 31st	393,690	"
	April 1st to April 21st	298,080	"
		928,430	gallons.
	Average volume supplied daily	11,462	gallons.

MILK DISTRIBUTION, 1915-1916.

Name of Station	Date opened 1915.		Number of days open.	Number of bottles distributed.	Average per day.
Watou	March	30	413	27,093	65.6
Dickebusch	March	31	25	917	32.7
St. Jean ter Biezen	April	7	405	9,474	23.4
Poperinghe	April	10	345	9,281	26.9
La Clytte	April	16	396	6,293	15.9
Abeele	May	12	371	20,719	55.8
Proven	May	14	368	19,690	53.5
Crombeke	May	25	357	14,873	41.7
Westoutre	June	8	343	17,290	50.4
Reninghelst	June	9	337	15,466	45.9
Westvleteren	June	24	326	14,090	43.2
St. Sixte	June	29	312	4,149	13.3
Dranoutre	October	25	203	5,074	25.0
Locre	October	26	202	10,799	53.4
Totals			4,403	175,208	547.0

Each bottle contained 1 quart of milk.

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SECTION II.—MISCELLANEOUS.

GENERAL SUMMARY OF MOTOR WORK, 1914—1919.

DATE.	BRITISH MILITARY.		FRENCH MILITARY.		CIVILIAN.		ADMINISTRATIVE.	TOTALS.	
	Kilms.	Patients.	Kilms.	Patients.	Kilms.	Patients.	Kilms.	Kilms.	Patients.
November—December, 1914	—	—	12,834	5,193	6,826	1,509	—	19,660	6,702
January —June, 1915	14,568	2,424	68,993	11,577	47,051	2,372	—	130,612	16,373
July —December, 1915	12,524	450	153,042	16,236	188,958	888	—	354,524	17,574
January —June, 1916	4,761	252	164,319	18,721	81,222	273	69,839	320,141	19,246
July —December, 1916	10,262	674	249,693	40,680	24,755	313	87,440	372,150	41,667
January —June, 1917	19,698	1,899	373,372	46,402	30,914	672	77,944	501,928	48,973
July —December, 1917	55,128	3,301	318,366	33,231	35,062	325	72,937	481,493	36,857
January —June, 1918	60,812	4,590	299,258	30,701	108,616	4,609	64,038	532,724	39,900
July —December, 1918	64,559	5,092	431,937	36,477	171,904	4,528	90,269	758,669	46,097
January —February, 1919	11,407	1,063	54,409	2,516	25,416	449	36,141	127,373	4,028
TOTALS	253,719	19,745	2,126,223	241,734	720,724	15,938	498,608	3,599,274	277,417

DETAILS OF FRENCH CONVOYS' WORK, 1915—1919.

DATE.	S.S.A. 13.		S.S.A. 14.		S.S.A. 19.		"F.U."		H.Q. CARS.		TOTALS.	
	Patients.	Kilms.	Patients.	Kilms.	Patients.	Kilms.	Patients.	Kilms.	Patients	Kilms	Patients.	Kilms.
July —Dec. 1915	8,752	76,290	6,611	72,620	—	—	873	4,132	—	—	16,236	153,042
Jan. —June 1916	.. 4,379	54,832	3,748	52,339	—	—	10,574	56,330	20	818	18,721	164,319
July —Dec. 1916	.. 28,550	116,833	4,137	76,400	2,114	22,277	5,779	33,115	100	1,068	40,680	249,693
Jan. —June 1917	.. 12,158	113,671	17,358	125,155	9,242	93,403	7,644	41,143	—	—	46,402	373,372
July —Dec. 1917	.. 3,869	49,856	3,095	74,725	6,414	98,057	19,853	95,728	—	—	33,231	318,366
Jan. —June 1918	.. 6,845	60,854	8,633	100,858	6,130	89,677	9,093	47,869	—	—	30,701	299,258
July —Dec. 1918	.. 9,878	116,516	7,228	126,541	7,821	114,178	11,550	74,702	—	—	36,477	431,937
Jan. —Feb. 1919	.. 70	10,558	150	19,500	55	18,955	2,241	5,396	—	—	2,516	54,409
TOTALS	.. 74,501	599,410	50,960	648,138	31,776	436,547	67,607	358,415	120	1,886	224,964	2,044,396

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TOTALS CARRIED ON F.A.U. AMBULANCE TRAINS.

	Period.	Trips Made.	Front to Base and Base to Hospital Ship. Lying.	Sitting.	Sick.	Wounded.	Convalescents.	Repatriated P. of W.	Totals.
No. 16 A.T.	Aug. 1915—Jan. 1919	395	78,443	76,255	80,470	74,288	2,906	975	158,579
No. 17 A.T.	Dec. 1915—Jan. 1919	375	62,088	65,180	70,445	56,823	1,140	1,109	129,517
No. 11 A.T.	Mar. 1916—Jan. 1919	320	54,160	50,906	53,826	51,240	6,800	911	112,777
No. 5 A.T.	Aug. 1916—Jan. 1919	326	56,004	53,528	55,112	54,420	9,195	1,136	119,863
									520,736

AMBULANCE TRAINS' PATIENTS.

Although the overwhelming majority of cases carried on the Ambulance Trains were of course British and Imperial officers and men, it may be of interest to enumerate some of the other classes of patients actually carried :

Indian officers and men.
Army Nursing Sisters and V.A.D's.
Q.M.A.A.C.
British civilians (Y.M.C.A., civilian workmen, etc.).
" " (ladies).
U.S.A. officers and men.
" prisoners of war.
French officers and men.
" prisoners of war.
French civilians.
Italian officers and men.
Belgians.
Portuguese officers and men.
Russian prisoners of war.
Serbian prisoners of war.
German wounded and sick prisoners.
Chinese labour troops.
Egyptian labour troops.
South African native labour troops.

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MEMBERSHIP OF FOREIGN SECTION.

Total Serving in France and Belgium on November							1, 1914	..	..	..	43
,,	,,	,,	,,	,,	,,	,,	May 1, 1915	..	..	..	200
,,	,,	,,	,,	,,	,,	,,	November 1, 1916	..	..	..	465
,,	,,	,,	,,	,,	,,	,,	November 1, 1917	..	..	..	600
,,	,,	,,	,,	,,	,,	,,	May 1, 1918	..	..	..	612
,,	,,	,,	,,	,,	,,	,,	November 1, 1918	..	..	..	640

(Figures include Nursing Staffs.)

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APPENDIX "B"

DECORATIONS BESTOWED ON MEMBERS OF THE FOREIGN SECTION.

I. BRITISH.

Distinguished Service Order.

Captain Humphrey Nockolds.

Officer of the Order of the British Empire.

Captain L. B. Maxwell.
L. J. Cadbury.

Military Medal.

Matron H. K. Repton.
Sister A. Alexander.
Miss G. V. King, V.A.D.

Honorary Associate of Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem in England.

Captain L. B. Maxwell.
Captain Humphrey Nockolds.

Royal Red Cross.

Matron H. K. Repton.
Matron E. C. De Wind.
Sister L. Marsden.
Sister A. Alexander.
Sister C. L. Cattell.
Sister M. Francis.
Sister E. S. Surman.
Sister G. Youatt.
Miss G. E. Bell, V.A.D.
Miss B. Jefferys, V.A.D.
Miss D. G. Lawson, V.A.D.

Mentioned in Despatches.

Captain L. B. Maxwell.
Captain Humphrey Nockolds (twice).
Bevan W. Neave.
Dr. A. H. Fardon.
Harold Watts.

II. FRENCH.

Croix de Guerre.

A. F. Ardley (S.S.A. 14).
B. Ardley (S.S.A. 14).
F. J. Ardley (S.S.A. 14).
E. Awmack (S.S.A. 19).
T. B. Bendall (S.S.A. 19).
L. E. Benson (S.S.A. 14).
J. R. Bibby (S.S.A. 19).
R. A. Bigland (S.S.A. 14).
T. Birkett (S.S.A. 14).
E. Bollam (S.S.A. 14).
E. R. Brady (S.S.A. 19).
A. B. Brooks (S.S.A. 13).
H. T. Brown (S.S.A. 13).
J. W. Brown (S.S.A. 14).
H. H. Burtt (S.S.A. 13).
L. J. Cadbury.
R. Charnley (S.S.A. 13).
E. Cooper (S.S.A. 14).
S. H. Dickinson (F.U.).
P. E. Dyson (S.S.A. 14).
S. B. Eckersley (S.S.A. 19).
J. C. N. Eppstein (F.C.E.S.).
J. P. Fox (S.S.A. 13).
E. A. Frith (S.S.A. 13).
W. A. Gammon (S.S.A. 19).
T. E. Gill (S.S.A. 19).
F. C. Gillman (S.S.A. 19).
W. E. Greeves.
Sister K. E. Grice (Q.A.H.).
P. D. Goodall (S.S.A. 13).
L. A. Gripper (S.S.A. 14).
N. E. Gripper (S.S.A. 14 : killed).
A. Heald (S.S.A. 19).
A. Henderson (S.S.A. 19).
R. E. Holttum (S.S.A. 19).
W. Horner (S.S.A. 19).
C. E. Hudson (S.S.A. 19).
C. F. Humphrey (S.S.A. 19).
H. H. Jackson (S.S.A. 14 : killed).
H. S. Jackson (S.S.A. 19).
B. Jeffrey (S.S.A. 14).
J. Jones (S.S.A. 19).
J. Kelsall (S.S.A. 19).
W. T. Kelsall (S.S.A. 19).
P. F. King (S.S.A. 19).

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FRENCH—Continued.

Croix de Guerre.

J. T. Leyland (S.S.A. 14).
H. W. Locke (S.S.A. 13).
D. S. Long (S.S.A. 13).
C. E. Marshall (S.S.A. 13).
Captain L. B. Maxwell.
E. S. May (S.S.A. 19).
W. E. Meredith (S.S.A. 13).
W. Messer (S.S.A. 14 : killed).
H. E. Milton (S.S.A. 14).
A. E. Molyneux (S.S.A. 13).
G. H. Nedderman (S.S.A. 19).
E. Newbery (S.S.A. 14).
Captain H. Nockolds.
A. E. Parsons (S.S.A. 19).
A. Pearson (S.S.A. 14).
L. Pimm (S.S.A. 13).
C. Priestman (S.S.A. 13 : killed).
D. P. Rees (S.S.A. 19).
R. H. Robinson (S.S.A. 13).
W. Roylance (S.S.A. 19).
R. W. Scrimgeour (S.S.A. 14).
R. W. Smeal (S.S.A. 13).
L. A. Sokell (S.S.A. 13).
W. O. Stapledon (S.S.A. 13).
H. N. Stephens (S.S.A. 19).
F. G. Taylor (S.S.A. 14 : killed).
N. Turvey (S.S.A. 14).
A. D. Walker (S.S.A. 19).
W. Waterfall (S.S.A. 19).
J. O. Watkins (S.S.A. 19).
F. H. Wetherall (S.S.A. 13).
W. S. Wigham (S.S.A. 19).
A. Wiles (S.S.A. 19).
H. R. Wilmot (S.S.A. 19).
A. L. Wilson (S.S.A. 19).
E. V. Wilson (S.S.A. 13).
D. Wood (S.S.A. 13).
T. A. Worsdell (S.S.A. 19).
H. Wright (S.S.A. 19).
Sister M. Wright (Q.A.H.).
R. P. Yates (S.S.A. 14).

Citations of Convoys.

S.S.A. 13 :

(i) April 23rd, 1918, by the General Commanding the 8e *Corps d'Armée.*

(ii) November 3rd, 1918, by the General Commanding the 16e *Division d'Infanterie.*

S.S.A. 14 :

November 7th, 1918, by the Colonel provisionally Commanding the 127e *Division d'Infanterie.*

Citations of Convoys.

S.S.A. 19 :

(i) April 27th, 1918, by the General Commanding the 29e *Division d'Infanterie.*

(ii) August 2nd, 1918, by the General Commanding the 120e *Division d'Infanterie.*

(iii) December 28th, 1918, by the Commander-in-Chief of the French Armies, Marshal Pétain.

Médaille des Epidémies.

Captain H. Nockolds.
Matron H. K. Repton.
Sister A. Alexander.
Sister L. Marsden.
Sister E. S. Surman.

Médaille de la Reconnaissance Française.

Miss D. G. Lawson, V.A.D.

Médaille d'Honneur en Argent.

Captain H. Nockolds.

Médaille d'Honneur en Bronze.

Matron H. K. Repton.
Sister E. S. Surman.

L'Insigne Spécial en Argent.

Miss D. Champion, V.A.D.
Miss G. V. King, V.A.D.
Miss J. L. Wilson (Mrs. H. Nockolds), V.A.D.

L'Insigne Spécial en Bronze.

Sister G. Youatt.
Sister O. Matthews.
Miss E. M. Barter, V.A.D.
Miss M. J. Cadbury (Mrs. W. E. Greeves), V.A.D.
Miss A. Geldard, V.A.D.
Miss A. K. Greeves, V.A.D.
Miss M. E. Hardy, V.A.D.
Miss B. Jefferys, V.A.D.
Miss O. M. Wilson, V.A.D.

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III. BELGIAN.

Chevaliers de l'Ordre de la Couronne.

H. B. Darby.
Dr. G. R. Fox.
Dr. S. Henry.
Dr. W. L. Mallabar.
Dr. H. C. Manning.
Captain L. B. Maxwell.
William Mordey.
Dr. J. R. Rees.
Dr. E. W. Smerdon.
Captain M. Tatham.
Dr. T. T. Thomson.

Chevaliers de l'Ordre de Léopold II.

J. O. King.
G. W. Young.

Croix Civique de Ière Classe.

E. R. Brady.
Dr. H. C. Manning.
H. Watts.

IV. ITALIAN.

Silver Medal "della Saluta Publica."

Dr. T. T. Thomson (work during Ypres typhoid epidemic).

NOTE.—It should be noted that, although distinctions were bestowed on them by the French authorities, ordinary members of the Unit were not eligible for British military decorations.

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APPENDIX "C"

DIARY OF FOREIGN SECTION.

1914.

October 30th	Departure of first contingent of Unit from London.
October 31st.	Departure of first contingent from Dover. Survivors from H.M.S. *Hermes* rescued. Arrival in Dunkirk. Beginning of work at the Station Sheds, Dunkirk.
November 2nd	Headquarters established at Hotel du Kursaal, Malo-les-Bains.
November 10th	Opening of Woesten Dressing Station. Beginning of Motor Ambulance Work for French.
November 24th	Opening of St. Pierre Hospital, Malo, for French soldiers.
December 2nd	Opening of Sacré Cœur Hospital, Ypres, for Belgian sick and wounded civilians.
	Opening of Poperinghe "A" Station at the Collège. (French Motor Work).
December 9th	Opening of Vandenbusch Station (French Motor Work).
December 10th	Opening of Station at Sacré Cœur, Ypres, for French Motor Work.
December 14th	Opening of Oostvleteren Station.
December 15th	Opening of Dickebusch Station (French Motor Work).
December 20th	Shelling of Sacré Cœur Hospital, Ypres. Patients transferred to La Panne and to Male Asylum in Ypres.
December 21st	Opening of Poperinghe "B" Station (French Motor Work).
December 26th	Staff and patients return to Sacré Cœur Hospital, Ypres.

1915.

January 14th	Château Elisabeth, Poperinghe, taken over by F.A.U.
January 18th	First patients admitted to Château Elisabeth, Poperinghe.
January 31st	First water supply stations opened at Ypres.
February 5th	Beginning of systematic anti-typhoid inoculation work in Belgium.
February 7th	First evacuation to Malassise Hospital from Sacré Cœur Hospital.
February 9th	Visit of Sir George Newman and Rt. Hon. J. A. Pease, M.P., to Dunkirk.
February 14th	Formation of S.S.A's 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, and *Parc* in conjunction with the Hon. Lionel Holland's ambulances.
February 20th	Start of first Search Party.
March 3rd	Opening of Queen Alexandra Hospital, Malo, as French Military Typhoid Hospital.
March 16th	Opening of Belgian Boys' Orphanage at St. Sixte Monastery, Westvleteren.
March 23rd	Official formation of S.S.A. 14 completed.
March 26th	Opening of Belgian Girls' Orphanage at Wisques.
March 30th	Beginning of Milk Distribution to Belgian civilians. First Distributing Station opened at Watou.
April 18th	S.S.A. 14 to Elverdinghe and Poperinghe.
April 20th	Beginning of Second Battle of Ypres.
April 21st	60 patients evacuated from Sacré Cœur Hospital.
April 23rd	Evacuation of remaining patients from Sacré Cœur Hospital, Ypres.
April 24th	Dressing Station opened at Estaminet Augustine Straat, near Ypres.

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April 25th	First shelling of Poperinghe. Beginning of temporary evacuation of civilian patients from Château Elisabeth.
April 27th	First shelling of Dunkirk.
May 7th	Removal of Belgian Boys' Orphanage from St. Sixte to Wizernes.
May 8th	Transfer of Civilian Relief Section from Poperinghe to Caestre.
May 9th	Opening of Musée Hospital, Hazebrouck.
May 10th	Completion of evacuation of civilians from Ypres.
May 30th	Removal of Civilian Dressing Station from Estaminet Augustine Straat to Estaminet In Het Schaapstaal, Vlamertinghe.
June 15th	S.S.A. 14 moves to Malo; parts of Convoy to Bourbourg and Zuydcoote.
June 19th	Children's School opened at Château Elisabeth.
June 20th	Removal of Civilian Dressing Station from Vlamertinghe to Château d'Angellis, Dickebusch.
June 30th	Departure of P. J. Baker. L. B. Maxwell appointed O.C.
July 1st	S.S.A. 14 moves to Coxyde.
July 7th	St. Pierre Hospital closed.
July 10th	Civilian Dressing Station opened at Ferme Poulouche, Neuve Eglise.
July 16th	Starting of Second Search Party at Poperinghe.
July 17th	Civilian Dressing Station at Neuve Eglise removed to Le Romarin.
July 23rd	No. 3 B.R.C. Hospital, Abbeville, for British military cases, taken over by the Unit.
July 25th	Musée Hospital, Hazebrouck, transferred to Barge and Tent hospital, Watten.
July 30th	Departure of G. W. Young.
August 2nd	Civilian Dressing Station at Le Romarin closed.
August 15th	Unit staff begins work on No. 16 Ambulance Train.
August 22nd	Shelling of Château Elisabeth, Poperinghe. Beginning of removal of civilian patients, and of transfer of sheds to Ferme de Rycke.
September 13th	Visit of Rt. Hon. J. W. Wilson, M.P., and Mr. Arnold S. Rowntree, M.P, to F.A.U. Headquarters.
September 25th	Tent Hospital at Watten closed. Removal of Barge Hospital to near Bergues. F. G. Taylor (S.S.A. 14) killed at Nieuport Bains.
September 29th	Closing of Civilian Inoculation Station at Woesten, and transfer to Dickebusch. Death of Maurice T. Barker at No. 3 B.R.C. Hospital, Abbeville.
October 24th	Inspection of Ambulances and Garages at Dunkirk by the Director General of Transport of French Armies.
October 30th	First Anniversary Celebrations at Headquarters; message of congratulation from Their Majesties the King and Queen of the Belgians.
November 28th	W. Messer (S.S.A. 14) killed by a bomb near Adinkerke.
November 30th	F.A.U. staff begins work on No. 17 Ambulance Train.
December 1st	Search Party moves temporarily to Bailleul.
December 15th	S.S.A.'s 13 and 14 re-formed. "F.U." Groupement formed.
December 16th	S.S.A. 13 moves to Woesten.
December 20th	Closing of Civilian Dressing Station at Dickebusch (Dispensary only retained).

1916.

January 8th	No. 3 B.R.C. Hospital, Abbeville, closed.
January 25th	Unit staff begins work on No. 11 Ambulance Train.
January 27th	Departure of F.A.U. Dentist from Abbeville.
February 5th	Visit of Rt. Hon. J. W. Wilson, M.P., and Mr. Arnold S. Rowntree, M.P., to Dunkirk and Belgian Civilian Stations.
February 8th	Search Party temporarily suspend operations.
March 1st	S.S.A. 13 moves to Rexpoede.
March 3rd	First anniversary of Queen Alexandra Hospital: visit of Miss Fletcher, Principal Matron, B.R.C.S.
March 21st	F.A.U. staff joins the *Western Australia*. S.S.A. 14 returns to Coxyde.
April 1st	S.S.A. 13 moves to Crombeke.
April 16th	Opening of Reserves Camp at Malo.
April 22nd	Transference of Headquarters of Belgian Civilian Relief Work from Caestre to Steenvoorde, and of motor repair section from Parc St. Georges, Poperinghe, to Steenvoorde.

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April 30th	Search Party re-start after temporary suspension of activities from February 8th.
May 1st	S.S.A. 13 moves to Rexpoede. S.S.A. 14 moves to Malo.
May 4th	Closing of Dickebusch Dispensary Station.
May 5th	F.A.U. hands over all Civilian Work (excepting Search Party) to Aide Civile Belge.
May 15th	S.S.A. 13 moves to Crombeke.
May 20th	Departure of T. C. P. Catchpool, Adjutant. Appointment of W. Mordey as Adjutant. H. Watts appointed Deputy Adjutant.
May 26th	Opening of Recreation Room No. 1 at Seamen's Institute, Dunkirk.
May 28th	Search Party moves from Poperinghe to Boeschepe.
June 1st	S.S.A. 14 moves to Coxyde.
June 5th	S.S.A. 13 moves to West Cappel.
June 7th	S.S.A. 13 moves to Malo : part of Convoy to Beveren.
June 30th	S.S.A. 14 moves to Malo.
July 1st	S.S.A. 13 moves to Coxyde. Performance by F.A.U. concert party in Malo Casino in aid of Malo prisoners of war.
August 1st	S.S.A. 13 moves to Malo. S.S.A. 14 moves to Coxyde.
August 10th	Unit's staff begins work on No. 5 Ambulance Train.
August 16th	Beginning of temporary agricultural work by 20 members of the Unit on farms near Bergues.
August 31st	Departure of S.S.A. 13 for Compiègne.
September 1st	F.A.U. staff joins the *Glenart Castle*.
September 3rd	Closing of Reserves Camp, Malo.
September 7th	Visit of Mr. T. Edmund Harvey, M.P., to Headquarters.
September 8th	Cessation of agricultural work near Bergues.
September 9th	Transfer of Headquarters from Hotel du Kursaal to Hotel Pyl.
September 15th	Opening of temporary Recreation Hut at St. Pol Aircraft Dépôt.
September 16th	Visit of Lord Northcliffe to Headquarters.
October 1st	Formation of S.S.A. 19 completed.
October 9th	S.S.A. 14 moves to Bergues.
October 15th	S.S.A. 14 leaves Bergues for Montreuil-sur-Brêche.
October 27th	S.S.A. 14 at Ourcel Maison.
October 28th	Second Anniversary Celebrations at Headquarters.
November 1st	S.S.A. 19 goes to Coxyde.
November 3rd	Transfer of Unit General Stores to Petit Casino.
November 4th	S.S.A. 14 moves to Roche Condé.
November 8th	S.S.A. 14 moves to Vaux.
December 1st	S.S.A. 19 returns from Coxyde to Malo.
December 2nd	Opening of No. 2 Recreation Room at St. Pol.
December 5th	S.S.A. 14 at Mailly Raineval.
December 8th	Belgian Civilian Ambulance Section of two cars attached to Maternity Hospital, Rousbrugge.
December 24th	S.S.A. 14 moves to Grandvilliers.
December 25th	Opening of Recreation Room No. 3 on Docks at Dunkirk.

1917.

January 1st	S.S.A. 19 returns to Coxyde.
January 10th	S.S.A. 14 moves to Pont St. Maxence.
January 20th	Visit of G. W. Young to Headquarters.
January 26th	S.S.A. 13 moves to Pont St. Maxence.
January 28th	S.S.A. 13 moves to Châlons-sur-Marne.
January 29th	Civilian patients evacuated from Barge Hospital preparatory to using it for French military cases.
February 4th	Arrival of S.S.A. 14 at Headquarters to take over 22 Buick Ambulances.
February 5th	S.S.A. 13 moves to Ste. Menehould.
February 7th	Departure of S.S.A. 14 from Headquarters. Car stationed at Hazebrouck for civilian evacuations under Madame Liouville.
March 1st	The *Glenart Castle* torpedoed or mined off the Isle of Wight.
March 3rd	Concert at Queen Alexandra Hospital to mark the Second Anniversary of its opening.
March 10th	F.A.U. staff withdrawn from the *Glenart Castle*.

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March 17th	Sister Grice decorated with *Croix de Guerre* at Queen Alexandra Hospital. Visit of Sir George Newman to Dunkirk. Three members of the Unit wounded by bomb dropped near Headquarters.
April 3rd	S.S.A. 13 moves to Villers Marmery.
April 5th	S.S.A. 14 moves to Suippes.
April 26th	S.S.A. 13 moves to Vavincourt.
May 2nd	Death of W. K. Smith (No. 17 A.T.) in No. 7 General Hospital, St. Omer. S.S.A. 13 moves to Ancemont.
May 12th	F.A.U. staff withdrawn from the *Western Australia*.
June 18th	S.S.A. 13 moves to Joinville.
June 19th	S.S.A. 14 moves to Vanault-le-Châtel.
June 20th	S.S.A. 19 moves to Pont d'Oye.
June 27th	S.S.A. 13 moves to Vieil Dampierre.
July 8th	S.S.A. 13 moves to Maffrécourt.
July 13th	S.S.A. 14 at Ferme de Piémont.
July 14th	Sœur Julienne (of Hôpital d'Ypres) killed by shell at Château Elisabeth, Poperinghe.
July 19th	S.S.A. 14 moves to Bussy-le-Château.
July 20th	S.S.A. 19 moves to Vieille Eglise.
July 22nd	S.S.A. 19 moves to Ferme Delplace.
July 31st	S.S.A. 19 moves to Oostvleteren.
August 11th	Visit of Captain Dennis Bayley to S.S.A. 14.
August 12th	S.S.A. 19 moves to Vieille Eglise. Visit of Captain Dennis Bayley to S.S.A. 13.
August 16th	S.S.A. 19 returns to Oostvleteren.
September 1st	Visit of Mr. T. Edmund Harvey, M.P., to Headquarters.
September 4th	Death of Miss K. S. Kinnear, V.A.D., at Queen Alexandra Hospital.
September 14th	Visit of Sir Rickman Godlee, Bart., K.C.V.O., to Headquarters.
September 15th	S.S.A. 19 moves to Rousbrugge.
September 17th	S.S.A. 19 returns to Oostvleteren.
October 10th	S.S.A. 14 moves to Passy-Grigny.
October 19th	Dr. H. Nockolds gazetted Temporary Hon. Captain, R.A.M.C.
October 30th	Third Anniversary Celebrations at Headquarters.
November 13th	Matron H. K. Repton, Sister A. Alexander and Miss G. V. King (Queen Alexandra Hospital) awarded Military Medal.
November 18th	S.S.A. 19 moves from Oostvleteren to Coxyde Bains.
November 20th	S.S.A. 14 moves to Bouleuse.
November 30th	Visit of Mr. A. J. King to Headquarters.
December 5th	S.S.A. 13 moves to Epense.
December 18th	Destruction by fire of Ward "G" (Kit Store), Queen Alexandra Hospital.
December 21st	S.S.A. 13 moves to Gizaucourt.
December 26th	S.S.A. 14 moves to Châlons-sur-Vesle.
December 31st	Farewell presentation to Captain Maxwell at Headquarters.

1918.

January 1st	Departure of Captain Maxwell; succeeded by M. Tatham as O.C.
January 6th	S.S.A. 13 moves to Braux St. Rémy.
January 8th	Arrival of nine new "Vulcan" Ambulances for S.S.A. 19.
February 2nd	S.S.A. 13 returns to Maffrécourt.
February 10th	S.S.A. 19 moves to Malo-les-Bains.
March 7th	Beginning of transfer of Queen Alexandra Hospital sheds from Malo to Château De Wèvre at Petite Synthe.
March 8th	Re-opening of Recreation Room No. 1 after alterations and extensions.
March 15th	Beginning of removal of Recreation Room No. 3 from Dunkirk Docks to Mardyck.
March 24th	Shell in Queen Alexandra Hospital site, Malo. Transfer of patients and staff to Petite Synthe.
March 29th	Departure of S.S.A. 19 from Malo towards Amiens.
April 2nd	Arrival of S.S.A. 19 at Boves.
April 10th	German attacks at Armentières: evacuations from Nieppe, Bailleul, etc.
April 12th	Civilian Casualty Clearing Station established at Ebblinghem. Barge *Secours* taken over as French Civilian Hospital and towed to Pont de Petite Synthe.

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April 16th — S.S.A. 19 moves to Namps-au-Val, thence to Equennes.
April 18th — Search Party moves from Boeschepe to Herzeele.
April 20th — S.S.A. 19 moves to Nanteuil near Méaux, thence to Ligny-en-Barrois.
April 22nd — Belgian Civilian Evacuation Section started. Two cars stationed at Watou.
April 25th — F.C.E.S. moves from Ebblinghem to Oxelaere.
April 29th — Removal of Belgian Civilian Ambulance Section (Maternity Hospital) from Rousbrugge to Leysele.
April 30th — Work started at Belgian Civilian Refugee Camp, Rousbrugge.
May 3rd — S.S.A. 19 moves to Savonnières.
May 10th — S.S.A. 19 moves to Camp Fréty.
May 21st — S.S.A. 14 moves to Limé.
May 27th — S.S.A. 14 moves to Cuiry-Housse: retreat to the Marne begins. H. H. Jackson and N. E. Gripper (S.S.A. 14) killed at Braine.
May 27th — S.S.A. 19 moves to Epense, thence to Venteuil, Mareuil, Boursault.
May 31st — Removal of Belgian Boys' Orphanage from Wizernes to south of Paris.
June 1st — S.S.A. 14 at Bellot.
June 3rd — Captain Nockolds receives D.S.O.
June 14th — S.S.A. 14 at Rarécourt.
June 17th — Civilian Casualty Clearing Station at Ebblinghem closed.
June 30th — Barge Hospital for refugee civilians closed.
S.S.A. 14 at Bois de la Cousance.
July 4th — S.S.A. 19 moves to Les Limons.
July 6th — Visit of Mr. T. Edmund Harvey, M.P., to Headquarters.
July 7th — S.S.A. 19 moves to Ay.
July 8th — S.S.A. 14 moves to La Noue.
July 13th — Visit of Rt. Hon. Lord Gainford to Headquarters.
July 26th — S.S.A. 13 moves to Bournonville.
July 27th — S.S.A. 14 moves to Méaux: thence to Vivières and Dampleux. S.S.A. 19 moves to Mairy.
July 28th — S.S.A. 13 moves to Ay.
August 2nd — S.S.A. 14 moves to Oulchy-le-Château: thence to Maast.
August 3rd — S.S.A. 13 moves to Bligny.
August 9th — Colin Priestman (S.S.A. 13) killed at Treslon.
August 11th — Destruction of Unit's Headquarters by bomb. C. L. Proctor and F. O. Kitching killed. S.S.A. 19 moves to Glorieux (Verdun).
August 12th — Removal of Headquarter Offices to No. 9, Avenue du Kursaal, Malo, and of Headquarter Billets to old site of Queen Alexandra Hospital.
August 13th — Visit of H.M. the King to Queen Alexandra Hospital.
August 14th — S.S.A. 14 at Le Boy d'Essarts.
August 21st — S.S.A. 14 at Vic-sur-Aisne.
August 28th — S.S.A. 14 at L'Isle Adam.
September 1st — "French Civilian Evacuation Section" becomes "French Civilian Relief Section."
September 5th — S.S.A. 14 at Château d'Hérivaux.
September 6th — Search Party moves from Herzeele to Rousbrugge.
September 10th — "Belgian Civilian Evacuation Section" becomes "Belgian Civilian Relief Section."
September 15th — S.S.A. 19 moves to Grange-aux-Bois.
September 17th — S.S.A. 14 moves to Soissons. Hut dépôt for returning civilians opened by F.C.R.S. at Caestre.
September 22nd — Belgian Civilian Ambulance Section moves from Leysele to Doorntje.
September 29th — Civilian Casualty Clearing Station opened at Hazebrouck by F.C.R.S. to prepare for relief of Lille, etc. B.C.R.S. cars move to Ypres.
September 30th — F.C.R.S. moves from Oxelaere to Caestre.
October 1st — S.S.A. 13 cars cross river Vesle.
October 2nd — F.C.R.S. moves from Caestre to Flètre.
October 3rd — F.U. Groupement moves to Haringhe.
October 14th — S.S.A. 14 at Laon-Semilly.
October 18th — F.C.R.S. cars enter Roubaix and Tourcoing. S.S.A. 19 moves to Mourmelon-le-Grand.
October 19–20th — S.S.A. 14 at Laon-Vaux.
October 21st — Civilian C.C.S. at Hazebrouck moved to Hôpital Civil at Tourcoing.
October 22nd — F.C.R.S. moves to the Usine Coulommier at Tourcoing.
October 25th — Search Party moves to Courtrai.

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October 27th	No. 1 Belgian Civilian Hospital opened at Poperinghe. No. 2 Belgian Civilian Hospital opened at Courtrai.
October 30th	S.S.A. 14 leaves Laon for Châlons-sur-Marne. J. F. W. Woodwiss (No. 5 A.T.) died in hospital at Abbeville. F.U. Groupement moves to Roulers.
October 31st	S.S.A. 19 moves to Machault. Fourth Anniversary of Unit celebrated at Headquarters.
November 1st	F.C.R.S. moves to Estaimpuis.
November 4th	S.S.A. 14 moves to Vincey, Vosges.
November 5th	S.S.A. 19 moves to Vouziers.
November 8th	S.S.A. 19 moves to Le Chesne.
November 9th	S.S.A. 19 moves to Vendresse.
November 11th	Armistice signed.
November 17th	S.S.A. 19 moves to Suippes.
November 19th	F.U. Groupement returns to Dunkirk.
November 21st	S.S.A. 13 leaves Ay for Fismes.
November 22nd	Death of L. G. Jarvis (H.Q. Works Department) in Queen Alexandra Hospital.
November 25th	S.S.A. 14 takes part in official entry to Oberbetschdorf.
November 26th	Unit withdraws from No. 1 Belgian Civilian Hospital.
December 1st	F.C.R.S. moves to Tournai; now "Belgian Relief Section, Southern Area."
December 4th	S.S.A. 14 at Châlons-sur-Marne.
December 5th	S.S.A. 14 at Bischwiller.
December 7th	Admission of British Army cases to Queen Alexandra Hospital ceases. S.S.A. 13 at Croix St. Ouen.
December 9th	S.S.A. 14 at Strasbourg.
December 14th	S.S.A. 19 moves to Vitry-le-Francois: thence to Ligny-en-Barrois and Malzéville (Nancy).
December 20th	Admission of British Naval and of French cases to Queen Alexandra Hospital ceases. S.S.A. 13 moves to Guise.
December 24th	Visit of L. B. Maxwell to Headquarters.
December 29th	S.S.A. 14 moves to Oberhofen.
December 31st	Queen Alexandra Hospital closed.

1919.

January 7th	Search Party leaves Belgium.
January 15th	Withdrawal from No. 2 Belgian Civilian Hospital, Courtrai. Withdrawal of F.U. Groupement. Withdrawal of Belgian Civilian Ambulance Section. Withdrawal from Seamen's Institute (No. 1 Recreation Room).
January 21st	S.S.A. 13 returns to Headquarters for demobilisation. S.S.A. 19 leaves Nancy for Paris.
January 28th	S.S.A. 14 and S.S.A. 19 return to Headquarters for demobilisation.
January 31st	Demobilisation of No. 16 Ambulance Train.
February 1st	Demobilisation of No. 11 Ambulance Train.
February 2nd	Demobilisation of No. 17 Ambulance Train.
February 3rd	Demobilisation of No. 5 Ambulance Train.
February 4th	Withdrawal of British Base Convoy, Dunkirk.
February 5th	Withdrawal of Belgian Relief Section, Tournai.
February 10th	Staff of No. 3 Recreation Room (Mardyck) demobilised, but continue work independent of the Unit.
February 15th	Withdrawal of Belgian Relief Section, Courtrai. Withdrawal from No. 2 Recreation Room (St. Pol).
February 28th	Transference of 30 members under W. Mordey to American Red Cross for Relief Work in Belgium.
March 4th	Headquarters closed.

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BOOK II.

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Home Service Section

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CHAPTER I

HOSPITALS IN ENGLAND.

The Haxby Road Hospital, York.

In the early summer of 1915 the War Office accepted the offer made by Messrs. Rowntree & Co., Ltd., of the large recreation and dining block of their works at York, for conversion into a War Hospital. These premises, which are finely situated on the outskirts of the city, were certainly admirably suitable for such a purpose, with large airy rooms, good communications between the working parts of the building, and ample kitchen and sanitary arrangements. Some adaption to changed requirements was, of course, necessary, but only a few weeks sufficed to convert the large dining-halls into eleven wards, each capable of holding about 24 beds. The full accommodation of the hospital was about 300 beds.

In June, 1915, a request was received by the F.A.U. Committee that members of the Unit should be provided to staff this hospital when its alteration had been completed. This was a new departure for the Unit, which up till then had concentrated all its energies on its work in France and Belgium. But by that time there were more men available for undertaking a fresh sphere of work, and the circumstances of this hospital's establishment naturally gave it a special interest in the eyes of Friends. The proposal was accepted, and some forty volunteers were found to form the nucleus of the Unit's first hospital in England. They went into training together at the Settlement, York, for a short period, and when once the buildings in Haxby Road were clear of the workmen, entered into possession.

Their first task—and no light one—was the clearing of all the litter of shavings and débris left by the departing carpenters and builders, and a full fortnight was spent in the thorough cleaning of every corner of the large building and in general preparation for hospital use. Then followed the complicated business of equipping the hospital. Numerous lorries and wagons rolled up with every conceivable kind of stores, from beds and bedding to egg-cups and shaving-brushes; surgical equipment, drugs, bandages, dressings, splints—everything, in fact, that could be needed in a hospital. The reception and distribution of all these was quite a formidable task for a staff which was having its first experience of medical organisation.

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By the beginning of August the wards were all in readiness, and on the 8th the first convoy of patients arrived. Hospital life had now commenced in earnest, and nursing classes under the guidance of the medical officer (R.A.M.C.) in charge, the matron, and some sisters, soon produced a body of efficient ward orderlies. Convoys soon began to fill all the available beds, and with the exception of the spring of 1916, the hospital was, as a rule, taxed to its utmost capacity to provide room for patients from overseas. In times of heavy fighting convoys often arrived three or four times in a week, and the corridors and dining rooms had then to accommodate 40 or 50 beds extra.

Towards the middle of 1918 instructions were received to arrange for the accommodation of 200 patients who would be dressed, clothed and fed at the hospital, but billeted in private houses in the neighbourhood. Additional rooms were lent by Messrs. Rowntree & Co., and marquees were erected and used as dressing tents. Although the full number of billeted patients was never accommodated, the preparations for their reception entailed a great deal of organising work.

The staff of 40 members which was sufficient in July, 1915, was found to be quite inadequate as soon as the hospital was in working order, and the strength was accordingly increased to 110. This remained the average number until the middle of 1918, when owing to the pressure of work in other fields, and losses through ill-health, the number gradually dropped, till by the end of 1918 the hospital was conducted with a staff of about 90.

The sleeping quarters were ample in the early days, but became insufficient as the strength increased. The offer by Messrs. Rowntree of Mille Crux, an old house standing in its own grounds about three-quarters of a mile from the hospital, was gratefully accepted, and 30 members of the staff were quartered there. In the summer months tents were erected in the grounds, and many moved from the close atmosphere of the hospital dormitories to sleep n the open.

Route marches, physical drill and lectures were important features of life in the early days, but as work increased and orderlies became more efficient, these phases necessarily dropped out. With the exception of the medical officers (R.A.M.C.) and sisters (Q.A.I.M.N.S.R.), the staff consisted of members of the F.A.U. The Commandant was also Quartermaster of the hospital, and as such was responsible for the care of the buildings and equipment, and for the clothing, feeding and well-being of all patients. His staff consisted of assistant Quartermaster, steward (with food store staff), linen and pack store keepers (with staff). The linen store issued all equipment and cleaning stores, and was responsible for the washing of all articles of clothing and bedding, and for the compilation of records used by Headquarters for comparison purposes. Of approximately 32,000 articles taken on charge during the period of the Unit's responsibility, only four were unaccounted for when ultimately handing over to the military authorities. The steward and his staff received and issued all food consumed by patients and orderlies, and at times, when convoys in and

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out were of very frequent occurrence, careful estimates of stocks required were necessary, as every ounce of food had to be accounted for to the A.S.C. Headquarters. The pack store took charge of the clothing and equipment of incoming patients and was responsible for seeing that they left the hospital with complete kit.

The X-ray, laboratory, office, and dispensary staffs were entirely responsible for their several departments. The cooks and mess-orderlies accounted for 20 members of the staff, and the remainder was divided between wards and general duties. In the wards duties ranged from scrubbing floors and serving meals, to surgical dressings and assistance to the surgeons at operations. The general duty staff was engaged in keeping clean and in good order the whole of the premises outside the wards. The day-wardmaster was, in the absence of the medical officer, responsible for all ward work. A staff sergeant acting in conjunction with the medical officer, matron and commandant saw to the allocation and efficient carrying-out of duties. Day duties began at 7 a.m. and finished at 8 p.m., when the night staff took charge. When practicable 3 hours were allowed as "off duty" daily, and endeavours were made to allow also one half-day in the week. In addition to the staff at the Haxby Road Hospital, a dentist with assistant, clinical clerk, two office clerks and two quartermaster's assistants were provided for the Fulford Central Military Hospital, York.

To describe the working day of the staff at York would be superfluous. Hospital life is for the most part an unvarying routine, whether it is carried on at home or abroad; and at such a hospital as that at York, with its one constant class of patient, the daily round of duty probably was even more monotonous than at some of the Unit's other hospitals, such as the Queen Alexandra Hospital at Malo, where the great variety of types and nationalities gave a certain stimulus to the imagination. But the pressure of work was fairly steady throughout the long career of the hospital. Between 8,000 and 9,000 patients were treated there from August, 1915, down to December, 1918. Of that number only 25 died in hospital, or about one-third per cent. This could not be because bad cases were not received at Haxby Road, for of every convoy arriving at York station this hospital almost always received the majority of cases, and a high proportion of the most serious ones. It was encouraging to find, more than once, that patients who had once been under treatment there would ask on a second occasion to be sent there again; or to hear from some patient newly arrived from France that he had been advised by a comrade out there to get to "the Friends at Haxby" if he could manage it. And it is pleasant to note that the relations existing between the staff and their officers, nursing sisters, and patients were throughout of a cordial nature. The position of the members at York had its difficulties, inevitable perhaps in the circumstances, and aggravated at times by attacks in the local press. But the realisation of these difficulties only served to strengthen that spirit among the men which enabled them to carry on the work, hard if not spectacular, to which they had put their hands.

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The staff changed in composition as time went on. When in the early part of 1916 volunteers were called for to take up work on the hospital ship *Western Australia*, almost the whole of the required number was forthcoming from the York hospital. From that time till the autumn of 1918 many men were drafted abroad for service with the Foreign Section of the Unit. Of the original 1915 staff only ten remained at the time of winding up the Unit's work at York.

In their social life the Unit staff owed much to the hospitality and kindness of many Friends and sympathisers in York and the neighbourhood, who spared no efforts to help them in making pleasant and profitable use of their hours off duty. The regular nature of their usual work made it possible for men to arrange a large variety of classes, debating societies, and the like, which helped to give some relief from the jading atmosphere of hospital life.

The King George Hospital, London.

The connection of the F.A.U. with this large military hospital, situated in Stamford Street, was comparatively short, lasting only from August to December, 1916. The circumstances of the time, coupled with the peculiar status of the Unit staff within the hospital itself, rather militated against the complete success of the undertaking. But in spite of many difficulties a good deal of work was accomplished which deserves description, though, as in the case of the York hospital, its nature was similar to that of almost any other institution of its kind.

It was on July 17th, 1916, that the earliest F.A.U. contingents arrived at the King George Hospital. The fact which impressed itself most on their minds was probably the sharp change from the clear atmosphere and green fields of Jordans to the stale air and dusty shabbiness of Stamford Street; especially as their earliest duties confined them largely to the basement. First of all the new man was allotted a bed in one of the barrack rooms, as the dormitories were called, and was initiated into the peculiar art of blanket-folding. As the F.A.U. men were intended to replace R.A.M.C. men who were leaving for France it can well be understood that, in the early days at any rate, their reception was none too cordial. But, as the individual men came to know one another, any massed antagonism which existed tended to disappear.

The hospital building, which previously had been intended to serve as a Government stationery warehouse, comprised a basement and six floors. In the basement were the stores of different kinds, the X-ray room and concert hall. On the ground floor were the laboratories, waiting-rooms, mess-rooms, canteens and offices. The five floors above were devoted to the patients, and were taken up with wards, lavatories, dining-halls, operating theatres. There were 1,700 beds, and most of the wards had each about thirty, one on each floor having double that number. The orderlies' barrack rooms and recreation room were on the ground floor. The roof of the hospital was occupied by what was called a "roof garden." No one quite knew why. This was just a dismal

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stretch of concrete bounded by iron railings. The scenery was varied by the presence of a number of wooden shelters and the kitchen ventilating shafts. The sweeping of the " garden " was among the least unpleasant of the duties of the fatigue party.

The corridors alone of the building totalled a distance of three miles, and, apart from the incessant labour of the wards, a great amount of energy was expended in walking. Twelve lifts were in constant use, but even this number proved inadequate at times. A staff of over 30 resident doctors and 250 nurses was constantly engaged in the medical and surgical work, in addition to a large number of visiting medical men. A small army of charwomen was engaged in cleaning, except in the wards, where the scrubbing of floors, washing-up and polishing fell to the lot of the orderlies.

The staff of N.C.O.'s and orderlies numbered over two hundred, and of these the number of F.A.U. members was, at its maximum, rather less than half. Orderlies were divided roughly into three classes: ward orderlies, corridor orderlies, and a small class specially favoured by fortune engaged on various fancy jobs. For all ward and corridor orderlies the hours were 6.30 a.m. every day, to 5 p.m. and 8 p.m. on alternate days. There was also a small fatigue party which did odd pieces of work about the establishment—work which for the most part resulted in very much less fatigue than the other duties. The place itself was oppressive by reason of its very size, not to mention the complexity of its organisation, and the new man for his first few days felt most of his brain energy used up in mastering regulations about parades and meal hours, and button cleaning, and late passes. But as he was generally placed first of all on the fatigue party, he had sufficient leisure to look about him and criticise his surroundings.

From the outsider's point of view, the most interesting part of the work at a hospital might perhaps be the manner of dealing with new patients. Convoys of patients were liable to arrive at any time, night or day. At the King George Hospital the fatigue party was responsible for dealing with them during the day. At night, *i.e.*, from 8 p.m. to 6 a.m., one of the barrack rooms had to undertake the work. The result was that on "convoy night " the men of the dormitory concerned had to be prepared to get up at any time. If the convoy were so small that only a portion of the men were needed, the corporals would generally content themselves with summoning those who happened to be awake. But big convoys necessitated the hard work of the whole contingent.

The summons was generally well in advance of the time of arrival. Sometimes the alarm was a false one, and after standing about the dreary corridors, or kicking their heels on the " ramps " (as the loading platform was called) for some time, the men would finally be ordered back to bed. But this was the exception. In most cases there was just comfortable time to reach the respective stations on the different floors, before the purring of the cars was heard, and the convoy bell tolled out.

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The treatment of walking cases was, of course, simple enough. They just arrived and were led by an orderly to the ward to which they were assigned. The " cot cases " had first to be moved from the ambulance to the lift, each stretcher borne by four men. On arrival at its proper floor, it was removed from the lift and placed on a rubber-tyred trolley, which was wheeled to the ward. An orderly would hurry in and inform the sister of the new arrival. In almost perfect silence she would indicate the appropriate bed, and proceed in the semi-darkness to make any necessary preparations. Then the trolley would be pushed up to the end of the bed and the patient lifted off on his blanket. This was always a delicate operation and was an anxious time for the less experienced.

Apart from the occasional excitement of a London air raid, work at the King George Hospital went forward with little break in the monotony throughout the latter part of 1916. It was a busy time for home hospitals, covering the whole of the great battles on the Somme during that summer and late autumn, and the " King George " had its full share of the casualties from those costly attacks. But although as time went on the work became more familiar and so less exacting, the difficulties of joint administration within the hospital became more marked, and in December it was decided to withdraw the Unit staff. The first batch left on December 11th, the last party on December 23rd. A considerable proportion of the " King George " personnel was afterwards drafted abroad for service with the Unit in France.

The Uffculme Hospital, Birmingham.

The third hospital staffed by the F.A.U. in England was that at Uffculme, near Birmingham. This large house, beautifully situated in its extensive grounds, was well adapted to serve its purpose as an auxiliary hospital. In the earlier part of the war it had been used as a hostel for Belgian refugee families, but when the stress of this work was over, it was offered by Mr. and Mrs. Barrow Cadbury to the F.A.U. as a military hospital in the late autumn of 1916, and the generous offer was readily accepted.

In November, 1916, the first detachment of Unit men was posted at Uffculme, straight from Jordans training camp, to prepare for the reception of patients early in the following month. The new hospital was an auxiliary branch of the 1st Southern General Hospital at Birmingham, working under its official administration, but internally controlled entirely by the Unit. When the first party entered upon their tenancy the house was partly furnished, but a good deal of structural alteration and re-equipment had to be carried out to fit Uffculme for its new purpose. The cost of this was defrayed by the donors, and, within three weeks from beginning, the first convoy of patients was admitted on December 7th.

The beds available at the opening of the hospital numbered 80, but the accommodation gradually expanded throughout its existence, as may best be shown in the following table :—

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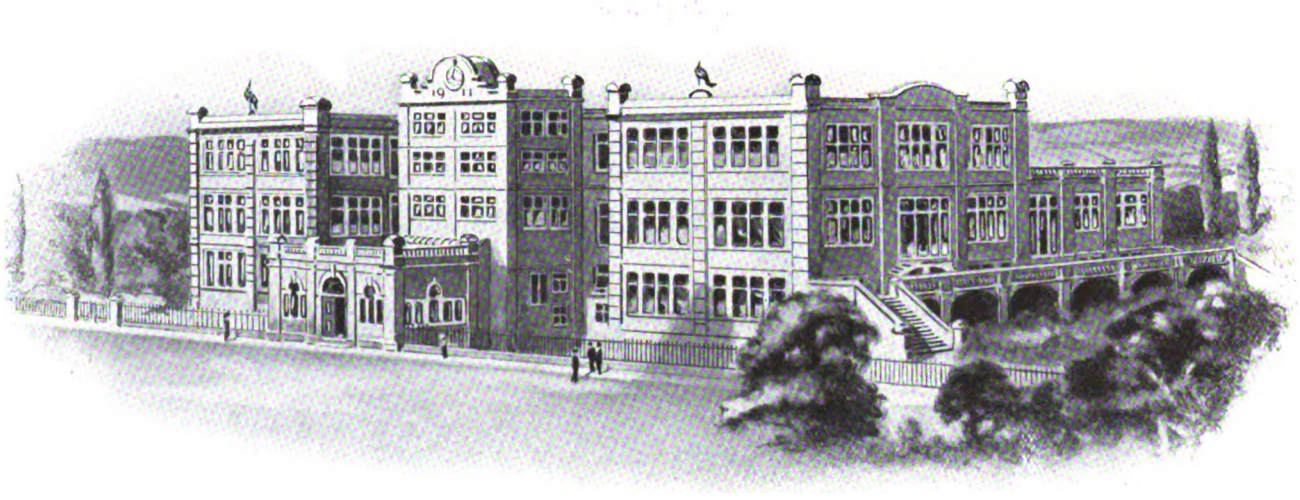

Plate XXX HAXBY ROAD HOSPITAL, YORK. Facing p 232

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Beds available,	December 7th, 1916	.. ..	80
"	" January 25th, 1917	.. ..	85
"	" February 2nd, 1917	.. ..	90
"	" March 30th, 1917	.. ..	125
"	" April 11th, 1917	.. ..	140
"	" April 26th, 1918	.. ..	170
"	" June 13th, 1918	.. ..	200

The large expansion was made possible by equipping in 1917 the tea rooms which stand in the grounds, as additional wards, and, in 1918, by the provision of several large marquees, which were erected on the lawn in front of the house. Until September, 1918, when Uffculme was transformed into an orthopædic centre, the maximum accommodation remained at 200 beds.

The whole of the personnel was provided by the F.A.U. The original detachment of orderlies from the "J 9" Camp underwent many changes. A number of men were transferred to the Foreign Service Section, while there were also some sent back from France owing to ill health who joined the Uffculme staff. When the staffs of the Hospital Ship *Glenart Castle* and the King George Hospital were disbanded, Uffculme received a certain number from each. The normal complement of orderlies was over thirty. The nursing staff throughout was under the direction of Sister Catell, the matron, who served with the Unit in France from November, 1914, and had worked at the St. Pierre, Queen Alexandra, and Abbeville hospitals, a record of devoted service which was fittingly recognised by the bestowal of the Royal Red Cross in 1918. Under her were usually three or four nursing sisters, belonging to the British Red Cross Society, and from seven to ten V.A.D. members, many of them members of the Society of Friends. The heavy responsibilities of these workers in a surgical hospital can easily be understood, but it should be recorded that they bore them with an ability and willingness which went far to put the success of the hospital beyond doubt. The fact that up to November, 1918, not a single patient died in Uffculme is in itself some testimony to their skill. For the greater part of the hospital's existence, from January, 1917, the chief medical officer was Dr. Austin Priestman, assisted by two honorary visiting doctors, whose help was of the greatest value in the conduct of the institution. The measure of their service may be gauged by the fact that from December, 1917, to September, 1918, the total number of patients admitted was 1,854, and the number of surgical operations performed was 101.

Life at Uffculme, both for patients and workers, was undoubtedly as pleasant as might be expected from such favourable surroundings. Both outdoor and indoor sports could be more easily arranged than in most similar hospitals, the grounds offering ample space for cricket and football, the large hall providing excellent opportunities for organising concerts and entertainments.

On September 10th, 1918, the hospital underwent a complete change in character. It now became a centre for limb fitting and orthopædic treatment for six Midland counties, being transferred for purposes of administration to the Special Military Surgical Hospital, Northfield. On that date Uffculme

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received its first batch of a new class of patient, thirty-two one-legged cases. Shortly afterwards men already discharged from the Army and in receipt of pensions, were admitted for orthopædic treatment from the Birmingham Citizen's Committee. Certain administrative difficulties were caused by this development, the hospital finding itself under the dual control of the Army, so far as serving soldiers were concerned, and of the Ministry of Pensions for these discharged men. But this did not detract from the value of the work which went on.

The procedure adopted in regard to limb-fitting at Uffculme was briefly as follows. A maimed man would be summoned to the centre, through the proper authorities, from almost any place in the six neighbouring counties, measured, and sent home on leave on the same day. He was later called up for a preliminary fitting of the limb under construction. When the arm or leg was completed he was called on to report for treatment and training in the use of the limb. He then remained at the hospital until his confidence in the use of the new member was assured. Usually the man's stay would be of two or three weeks' duration, but sometimes longer, if important readjustments proved to be necessary. During this time all sorts of exercises and small tasks were given to test the efficacy of the limbs and to develop the full power of using them. For this purpose the grounds of Uffculme, with their variety of gradients, were excellently suited; a fortunate contrast to at least one other limb-fitting centre where artificial gradients had to be constructed for purposes of exercise.

After the Armistice the number of beds was reduced to 130, additional accommodation being thus made available for the medical boards and other staff purposes connected with the work. The connection of the Unit with the Uffculme centre came to an end on March 1st, 1919, when the further continuance of the orthopædic work was handed over to a new committee appointed under the Birmingham Citizens' Committee. Up to that date the statistics stood as follow:—

Limbs completed	391
Discharged men treated	242
Repairs to artificial limbs	68
Pensioners admitted	49
Soldiers admitted for orthopædic treatment	46

In addition to these figures, 200 limbs had been measured and were in process of manufacture when the work passed to other hands.

Before closing the summary of the work performed at Uffculme in its two phases, it should be recorded in these pages how much the Unit owed in this branch to the generosity and collaboration of Friends in Birmingham, and particularly to Mrs. Barrow Cadbury and Mr. J. H. Lloyd. When the suggestion was first made to convert Uffculme into a new F.A.U. hospital, they not only undertook to defray all expenses of the institution, but appointed several

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committees to help in various directions. The work of the house, finance, and entertainment Committees was invaluable in making the hospital a success during the whole two years and four months of its existence. By their kindness too it was arranged that members of the Unit, from Foreign and Home Sections, could be admitted as patients, a privilege which was greatly valued by all who shared it. In this way some 27 members, sick and wounded, were treated during these years, the cost being defrayed by a special fund for this purpose.

The "Star and Garter" Home, Richmond.

The work of Unit members at the "Star and Garter" Home at Richmond stood in a rather different category from that at the other hospitals described in this chapter. The home was not, of course, in itself a branch of the Unit's work. It was, and still is, one of the most widely-known enterprises directed by the British Red Cross Society, and the Unit's share was concerned only with the provision of male personnel. In the nature of the work also, the "Star and Garter" differed very markedly from ordinary military hospitals, where patients enter to leave again restored to health and fitness. At Richmond the patients were all men who had been totally disabled in their country's service, sailors as well as soldiers, the great majority of them paralysed; and only for a very few was there even a faint hope that they could ever leave the Home for more than a short outing on a trolley or bath-chair. This peculiarly tragic aspect of the work gave it a character altogether different from most of the Unit's activities, which at any rate had behind them the hope of restoring broken men to health and usefulness. Here one could do no more than strive to lighten a lifelong burden of bodily suffering, and one was faced daily by the inadequacy of human art to heal what human ingenuity had destroyed.

The site of this Home could hardly have been finer; the beautiful old house with its wide views over the wooded banks of the Thames has long been famous in more cheerful connections. House and grounds were presented to the British Red Cross Society for this special purpose by the Auctioneers' Institute, and the Home was opened in January, 1916. The first orderlies there were men of the British Red Cross itself, and the three men of the F.A.U. who first went there were only sent for a short period, to help out the staff while the ward accommodation was being expanded in the early months of 1916. As the work did not diminish, however, they stayed on and formed the nucleus of a larger body, which by the end of the war numbered 22. Most of these men were engaged on the male nursing orderly duties of the hospital, which in the circumstances were especially exacting. A Unit dispenser was in charge of the medical stores and under direction of the medical officer performed all the dispensing of the hospital. A staff of nursing sisters and V.A.D. members was also attached, and a resident R.A.M.C. officer was in charge of the medical side of the Home. Altogether there were between sixty and seventy beds occupied in the "Star and Garter," and yet the whole of this comparatively large staff were kept fully employed, which is some indication of the difficult nature of the work.

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A short extract may be given here from an account written by one who served at Richmond :—

> "A fact," he writes, "which rendered the relations between the patients and orderlies unique was that changes were very rare. In the majority of military hospitals there is a constant coming and going of patients, the cured making room for the next batch of sufferers. At the 'Star and Garter' this is not the case, and so it came about that between patients and orderlies there was closer knowledge and understanding of each other. This fact had its advantages and its drawbacks. . . . Natural antagonisms could only be worn down by menial duties and additional services . . . and some small sacrifices of the precious hours 'off duty' often helped to win the confidence of even the most 'difficult' patients. . . . With one or two exceptions all the men were suffering from spinal injuries involving a lesion of the spinal cord, so causing paralysis of the lower part of the body, atrophy of limbs and organs, and an interruption of the natural functions. The nurses fought indefatigably against bedsores and other ailments to which men of lowered vitality are susceptible. The orderlies, acting as male nurses, helped to keep the patients clean, dressed and undressed them, lifted them from bed to chair, carried them to and from motor cars, in which the stronger patients from time to time enjoyed a ride, and generally tried to supply as many of their needs as was humanly possible. Other orderlies were employed on work which required special knowledge. . . . Some attempt was made to help to give the patients an interest in something more intellectual than 'pontoon' or 'house,' until an organised effort on the part of the authorities was made possible. In more than one case firm personal friendships were ultimately formed between patients and orderlies, not severed by the termination of the Unit's connection with the 'Star and Garter.'"

The Unit staff was withdrawn officially on January 1st, 1919, but some of their number stayed on at work for a short period. They were replaced by the nucleus of a permanent orderly staff, and the work of the "Star and Garter" still goes on, as it is likely to for many a year to come, a lasting activity of the British Red Cross Society, supported by public subscription from all parts of the world.

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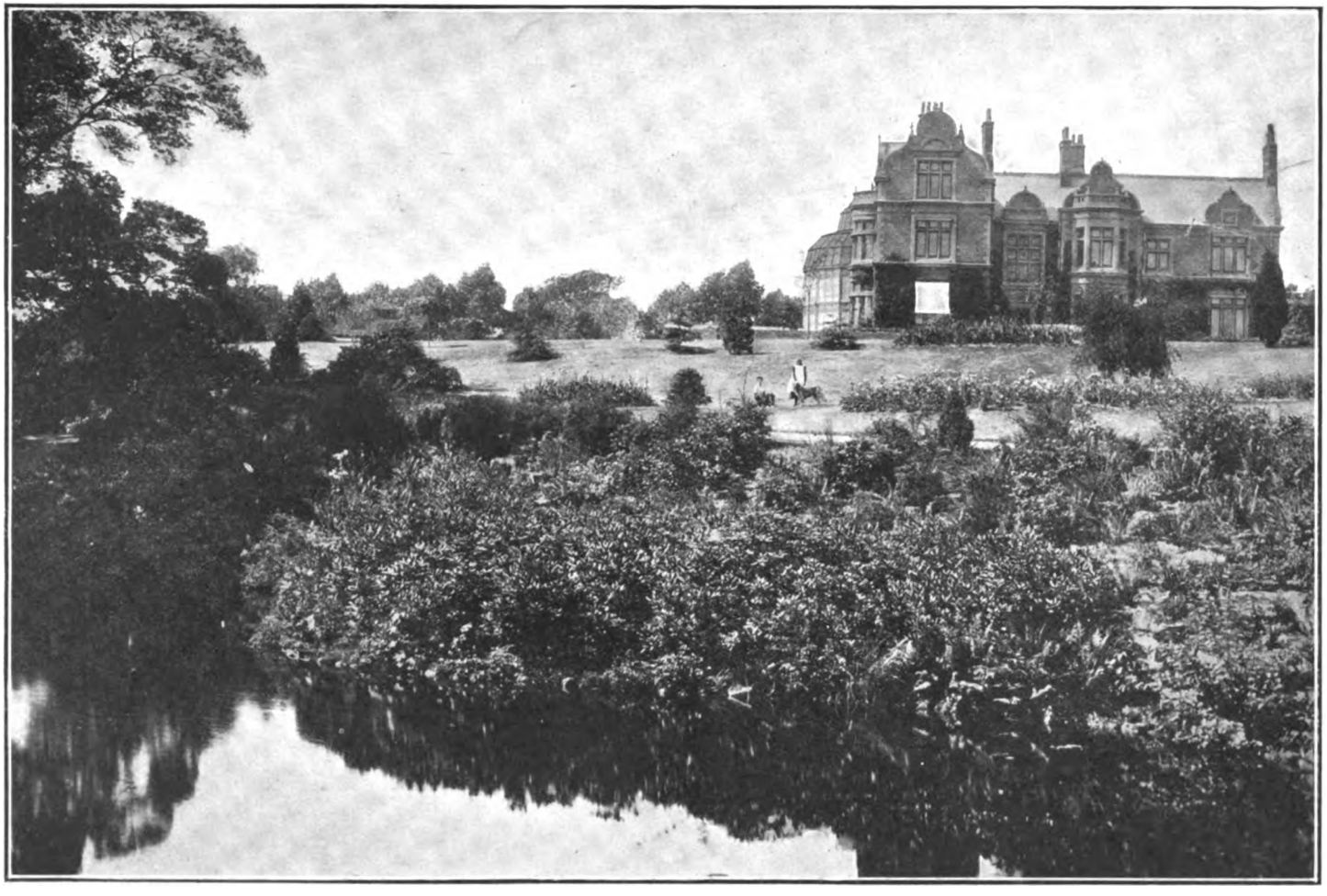

Plate XXXI

UFFCULME HOSPITAL, BIRMINGHAM.

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CHAPTER II

LONDON OFFICE, CLOTHING DEPARTMENT, JORDANS CAMPS, GENERAL SERVICE.

The London Office.

THOSE who during the war had occasion to visit the London offices of the Unit may perhaps wonder whether anything concerning such a dull uninteresting affair as an office deserves a place in this history. Certainly there was nothing picturesque or spectacular about the two grimy brick Georgian houses in quiet Weymouth Street, with their plain forbidding fronts. The name of the Unit on the small painted boards fixed by the doors of numbers 8 and 14, awakened only a momentary gleam of curiosity in the eye of the passer-by, who no doubt wondered if they had any connection with the Dumb Friends League, or with that illuminated text in the fanlight over the door of number 12. Nevertheless it is obvious that a large voluntary unit of 1,400 active workers, engaged on a diversity of work in many parts of Belgium, France, and England, and controlled by a responsible committee in London, could not be carried on without administrative machinery. A brief outline, therefore, of the development and organisation of the London office may interest not only the members of the Unit but also its supporters at home.

To begin at the beginning, a claim to be considered the first office of the Unit might, perhaps, be put forward on behalf of the little " granary " at Jordans. Here it was that Philip Baker held nightly councils, far into the soft September twilights of 1914, wrestling by the flickering light of a camp lantern with ambulance training, camp discipline, sanitation, commissariat, ways and means for his band of pioneers, long after stillness had settled on the white tents in the orchard, while the swallows, perched among the rafters, quite indifferent to the absorbing questions being discussed below, were doing their best to go to sleep. But when training gave place to active service and the first party took ship for Dunkirk, a London office, distinct from, but working in closest touch with, the Unit headquarters in the field, at once became a necessity. By the kindness of Mr. William Kennedy an office of one room at 123, Pall Mall, was placed at the Unit's disposal at the end of October. The work to be done, with only about fifty members on the roll, was of course small in volume as compared with later developments, but even then certain essential matters had to be taken in hand promptly:—

1. Continuous supplies of food, petrol, and medical stores had to be purchased and dispatched. For until the Unit established itself and discovered what sort of work it had to do, no previous preparation could forestall all needs, and urgent demands for stores of many kinds were sent back to London daily.

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2. Means of transporting such goods from London to Dunkirk had to be arranged. The Unit owed much in those early days to the kindness with which the Admiralty authorities helped with sea transport from Dover, overwhelmed though they must have been by more official demands. Even a couple of days' delay with a consignment of food or medical necessaries meant anxiety and difficulty for the struggling Unit in Flanders.

3. Before many days reinforcements were urgently demanded, a demand, be it understood, which but for a few brief intervals never ceased for four years. Rapid arrangements had to be made for the dispatch of doctors, dressers, orderlies, motor-drivers, and a few weeks later trained nurses.

4. All day long a stream of people passed through the office; applicants for service, tradesmen, anxious relatives with inquiries, or parcels to be forwarded to the front; and a correspondence on all sorts of Unit matters, great and small, began to come in.

The F.A.U. Committee were now meeting regularly in London, and though Chairman and Committee were as helpful as possible, there was still all this spadework to be got through, and it meant that for some months the small voluntary office staff were on duty often seven days a week, and took lunch and tea at their desks. It was a scramble. Some mistakes and failures were inevitable. But it will be remembered that the uncertainty of the Unit's position, finances, and future at this stage made it impracticable to set up permanent premises or elaborate office arrangements. Further, it was all emergency work, very different from the settled routine of later years, and one could never tell what the situation might be next week. And probably nobody foresaw either the long duration of the war or the wide expansion of the Unit.

By the end of the year the staff had quite outgrown the small space available at No. 123, Pall Mall, and the office was moved to an upper floor of the College of Ambulance, Vere Street, W., where the acquisition of several separate rooms and a telephone gave much-needed relief. For this arrangement the Unit was indebted to Dr. (now Sir James) Cantlie and his wife, who remained firm friends and helpers of the Unit throughout its career, and, with Mrs. Macdonald, the Secretary of the College, did all they could to smooth the path for the office as long as it remained at Vere Street.

From these days of small beginnings right down to the final winding-up, the London office staff was under the direction of J. Raymond Little, the Hon. Secretary of the Unit. And none who remember his long and valuable services in that responsible position could fail to forget the unsparing energy of Mrs. Little during the whole history of the London office. Throughout its various migrations and its many changes in personnel, they remained a constant element on which the Unit knew that it could place complete reliance. There were many who throughout the war rendered valuable service in connection with the duties of the Unit's Committee and London office, and among them the name of Mr. Percy Cooper, then of the Board of Education, should not be forgotten.

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The work of the office generally was of the same kind as before, but had increased greatly in volume, and a new development arose from the decision to organise an ambulance training course. The demand for more workers in Flanders continued. Hardly a week passed during this winter and spring without the dispatch of one or more parties of reinforcements to Dunkirk, and the supply of men trained at the first Jordans camp was now coming to an end. The course was held partly at Jordans, but mainly at the College of Ambulance, about thirty men receiving instruction under this arrangement. Dr. Cantlie threw himself into it with the greatest keenness, and his practical teaching proved of the greatest value afterwards in many a *poste de secours* and hospital ward. Later courses were all held in camp in the country.

After nearly twelve months at Vere Street, the growth of the London office, as well as of the College of Ambulance, made it necessary to seek more roomy and convenient quarters. Through the kindness of Mr. F. W. Stevenson, Surveyor of the Lord Howard de Walden estate, this need was generously met by the offer from the estate of an empty house, No. 8, Weymouth Street, at a purely nominal rent. A move was made there at the beginning of 1916, and the five stories and basement of the new hive were soon filled with a busy swarm. Here the office remained for the rest of the war.

The work of the office reached perhaps the point of highest pressure during 1917. The Military Service Acts introduced a great deal of complexity into the business of arranging the admission of new members for service with the Unit, and involved much correspondence with various Government departments and local authorities. The new member having been finally accepted by the Committee, it was necessary to arrange for his training, uniform, and in due course his journey, either to Dunkirk for service abroad or to one of the home sections. It was a matter of constant care to adjust the supply of new personnel to the varying and often conflicting demands of the different working sections and hospitals. In the process of obtaining official brassards, certificates and passports, and conveying the personnel to France, the Unit is deeply indebted to the Earl of Onslow (in the earlier days), Sir James McGill, and the Hon. R. Coventry and their assistants at the British Red Cross Headquarters in London, for their unfailing courtesy and helpfulness.

The miscellaneous nature of the goods which were sent out for the use of the Unit could only be fully realised by inspecting the indents or requisitions, which came in from Dunkirk at intervals of a few days all through the war. When clearing up final accounts at the end of the work, it was found necessary to communicate with over five hundred business firms. During the latter years, experience and methodical arrangement reduced the office work of this department to comparatively simple routine, but at the same time scarcity and strict Government control of a great number of essential articles added many complications.

Before the office had been long at Weymouth Street the question of living accommodation for some of the staff became pressing, and the Lord Howard de Walden estate again came to the rescue, and placed No. 14 (previously the

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London office of the Italian Red Cross) at the Unit's disposal on the same generous terms as before. The additional space not only provided the living accommodation required, but made it possible to establish a serviceable hostel, where on simple but adequate lines a bed and meals were always available for members from all sections, passing through or necessarily detained in London, several Friends giving or lending furniture. This institution proved most valuable, especially towards the end of the war, when living accommodation in London became exceedingly costly and almost impossible to procure at short notice, and private members' pockets grew at the same time lighter and lighter. Not the least pleasant memory of some strenuous days was of those half-hours when, quitting their congested desks, the staff gathered round the mess-table to discuss the burning topics of the day, or to listen to the tale of some fellow-member just back from the shell-pitted dunes of Coxyde or the wasted hills of Verdun.

Not to take up too much space with a dull subject, the following was briefly the general manner in which the work was grouped when in full swing :

1. New personnel, including applications for submitting to the Committee, exemptions, training arrangements, medical examinations.

2. Distribution of trained personnel, uniform and equipment, travelling arrangements, passports and brassards.

3. Purchase and dispatch of stores.

4. Finance, local payments and receipts, auditing, insurance, deposits of private money by members, maintenance fund administration.

5. Records, including a summary of the service of every member, as well as general records.

6. Administration of the General Service Section.

7. Provision of Nursing Sisters and V.A.D. Nurses.

8. Packing of stores, and private parcel service.

9. A local motor transport service, three cars being housed in rented and borrowed premises in mews behind Weymouth Street, where overflow space for stores was also obtained.

The signing of the Armistice relieved the office at once in several ways. The demand from France for a constant stream of new workers, which had been even more insistent than usual during the autumn of 1918, at length ceased, and those branches which dealt with passports and travelling, uniforms, and training camp arrangements could breathe again. The staff was cautiously reduced as opportunity offered, and one by one the workers departed till only the necessary minimum remained. As soon as the demobilisation of the unit abroad actually began to take effect, throughout February and March, 1919, the London office was again working at high pressure. Perhaps the only occasion on which the F.A.U. can have seemed at all interesting to the passer-by in Weymouth Street

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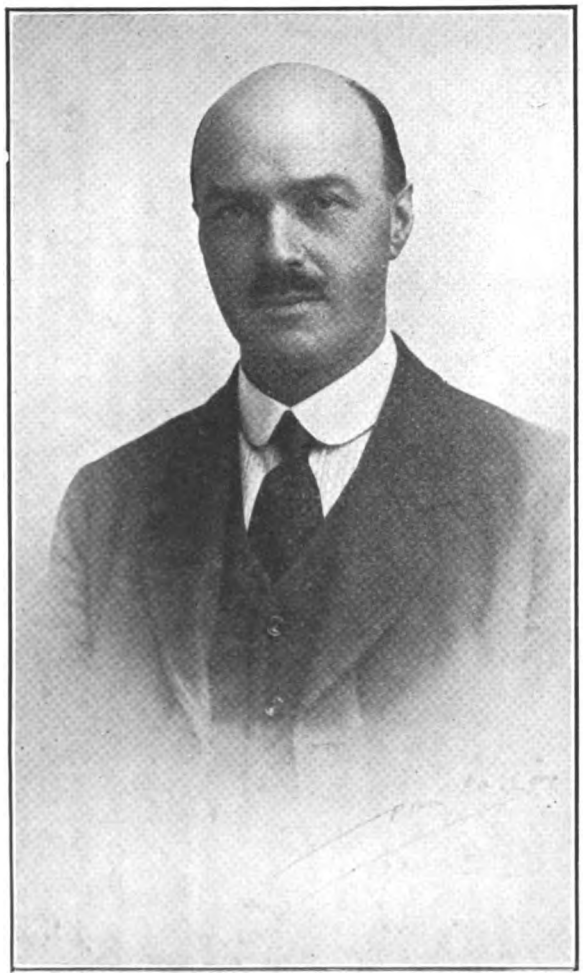

Plate XXXII J. R. LITTLE.

R. T. HANDLEY. Facing p. 240

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was the morning when a long line of war-battered cars, some of them marked with the insignia of the *Croix de Guerre*, was drawn up near the office, just unloaded from the docks, and waiting to be sold or returned to their owners. The sale of superfluous stores and equipment, the assistance of members back to their ordinary occupations, the calling in and settlement of accounts, the completing of records, and the handling of many tons of private baggage, caused a burst of activity recalling the feverish days of 1914. At length, however, the pressure subsided, and in March the hostel was closed and No. 14 vacated. The office on its war footing may be said to have been demobilised in the middle of March, but No. 8 was kept open for outstanding business until August, 1919.

Clothing Department.

The work of the Clothing Department, which had a close connection throughout with the London office of the Unit, is most fittingly dealt with in this chapter. Its function was the collection and dispatch abroad of all kinds of hospital and general clothing, bandages, swabs, linen, and the like, for the use of the Unit in France. It may easily be imagined how invaluable such a source of supply was to various branches of the Unit, especially to the hospitals and the work of civilian relief; but its nature hardly lends itself to a very detailed description.

The scheme originated in the early days of the war, when news was just coming through of the situation at Dunkirk and the out-stations with which the newly-formed Unit was faced. Appeals were sent out for help, and before long many gifts in money and kind came in from all parts of the country. Two main centres of collection were established, one directed by Lady Newman, at the College of Ambulance, Vere Street, the second at the headmaster's house at Bootham, York, where Mrs. Arthur Rowntree was in charge. Later on a definite headquarters grew up in the more spacious accommodation in Weymouth Street, and here the goods were stored, classified, and packed for shipment to Dunkirk. Urgent needs were first attended to, clean warm clothing to replace the wretched rags left to so many of the men who came through those early battles in the north, blankets, pillows, old linen, shirts, woollen helmets, and so on, for the hospitals, first by the dozen, then by the hundred, and in the end by the thousand.

As fresh hospitals and dressing-stations opened up, and as supplies and storage became more systematised, special demands could be dealt with as they came in. The development of civilian relief work in Belgium in the early part of 1915 nearly doubled the labour of the enthusiastic helpers at home. Children in the Orphanages had to be clothed and shod, civilian clothes found for refugee folk, both men and women, and at the same time supplies for the already existing hospitals had to be maintained and even increased.

But happily there was no lack of willing workers. The necessary supplies never once failed, although as the war advanced the price of material rose considerably, and it became increasingly difficult for many women to find

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opportunities for sewing amid the many claims on their time. Friends' Working Parties all over England and Ireland, set themselves to perform this service with an energy which never flagged; Dublin Friends alone contributed over 5,000 articles, and large shipments were received from Friends in Toronto, but where so many rendered valuable aid it would be almost impossible to say which distinguished themselves the most. And from other bodies as well generous gifts of work and material flowed in; from Queen Mary's Needlework Guild, various war relief societies, Red Cross sewing parties, War Hospital Supply Dépôts, Women's Adult Schools, to mention only a few.

Varied indeed were some of the special requests satisfied by the Clothing Department, whose name scarcely fitted its versatility. "Dorothy bags," gramophones and records, music, games (from a billiard table to a box of draughts) a library of books for the recreation rooms at Dunkirk, Christmas presents for the hospitals, and much else besides. But perhaps a few figures will help to show the extent of this Department's work during the Unit's existence. Behind them the eye of the sympathetic reader will discern a mass of devoted work cheerfully performed by women helpers in many parts of the world.

Blankets, rugs, coverlets	2,699	
Sheets	1,285	
Pillows and cases	3,054	
Towels and cloths	4,534	
Shirts, bed-jackets, pyjamas	11,843	
Vests and pants	3,447	
Socks	10,760	pairs.
Mufflers and other knitted comforts	7,180	
Handkerchiefs	5,441	
Miscellaneous (including civilian clothing, books, sandbags, etc.)	73,566	
Total number of articles	123,809	

Jordans Camps.

The training of men for service with the F.A.U. was conducted from November, 1915, onwards at Jordans Camp. The first batch, who assembled in September, 1914, to lay the foundation of what ultimately became the Friends' Ambulance Unit, also trained at Jordans, but continuity was not maintained until the succession of camps, twenty-one in number, began in November, 1915. Although a certain amount of training was also effected earlier in 1915 at York and at Oxhey, there is no doubt that Jordans may fairly claim to have been the training centre of the Unit.

It is unnecessary to describe the place in detail. To many readers of this volume it will already be familiar. It would have been difficult to have found a more suitable spot for this service. In the winter the barn and refectory of the hostel, together with the two dormitories which are situate over the refectory, formed the camp premises. In the summer, the barn was used for feeding and recreation, such as concerts, while the men slept under canvas in the orchard or the drill field. The drill field, which was also the sports field, was situated at the top of the hill to the east of the hostel.

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The training was short and sharp. Men arrived from civilian life, in civilian attire, and with civilian habits, and in five weeks were turned out as efficient as it was possible to make them in so short a time. It may fairly be claimed that, with the exception of the more difficult or the less intelligent, this period sufficed to ground a man adequately in the main qualities necessary for useful service. The technique of whatever branch the men entered was, of course, developed to the full by actual work with the section of the Unit to which they were posted. The main aim of camp life was not to turn out men qualified as only experience could teach them, but to turn them out fitted so far as possible to receive the benefits of experience. To this end they were accustomed to work together, to live together, to act with some measure of discipline and to face the disagreeable as part of their lot.

The camp routine was organised day by day in the form of "orders" which were posted up the night before they became operative. It included stretcher drill and infantry drill, for the development of discipline and the power of acting as a body. Lectures were conducted in first-aid, and at the end of the course it was customary for an examiner to come down from the Headquarters of the British Red Cross Society to test the knowledge, theoretical and practical, of the candidates. Frequently stretcher-drill would be combined with practical first-aid, men being chosen to act as patients while others bandaged them and collected them on to stretchers for transport to a given spot. A certain number of men also went further and took a course in home nursing, and qualified in this useful branch of knowledge. General work remained a constant element in camp routine. Naturally there was continually a certain amount of work to be done upon the camp premises, but in addition some permanent alterations were made to the hostel grounds by camp efforts. The construction of a tennis lawn provided scope for strenuous labour which, in the course of five weeks, would go far to harden the muscles and stiffen the backs of those habituated to the life of the office. The laying of a path for the use of campers through the orchard to the drill field also remains as a result of camp labour, and the construction of shower baths will, it may be hoped, bless future visitors as it blessed the men on their return from a long and dusty march upon the Buckinghamshire roads. Physical drill should also be mentioned. Each camp undertook a course of this exercise, in the earlier days under the guidance of an expert from London, but later, as the camps grew smaller in numbers, under the direction of a member of the camp staff.

From beginning to end of the Jordans period of training, marching played a prominent part in camp life. This item was frequently enjoyable, frequently dull and wearisome, but more than any other activity it provided a guide to the quality of a body of men. A man who has it in him to be good and efficient as an ambulance worker will be irritated by a slovenly march. The country within immediate reach of camp was excellent for this form of training. Hills, and flat stretches of road, with variety of scenery and good beech woods went a long way to alleviate monotony. For longer excursions occupying a whole day convenient places were numerous, such as Burnham Beeches, Oxhey Grange,

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Penn Woods. The great expedition always was to Reading and return, the whole march occupying two days, and including frequently a football or a cricket match against the members of Leighton Park School. Sometimes field practice in stretcher work would be combined with a day's marching, and much good work of this kind was done at Burnham Beeches or in Penn Wood.

Any account of camp training would be quite incomplete without the mention of night operations. There were woods situated near the camp very suitable for this form of exercise, and towards the end of the training, when the men were becoming fit for this form of endurance, it was customary to rouse the camp without warning at an hour fixed by the camp officers. As a test of sportsmanship and adaptability they were not without benefit to some who had never perhaps seen the sunrise in their ordinary life at home. Sportsmanship was also encouraged by seasonable games, and many good matches were played both at football and cricket. The five weeks' training was a concentrated course of hard work and physical exercise, open air life, and "sleeping rough." It broke the spell of civilian habit, and performed an essential function in rendering the men fit, adaptable, and accustomed to obey orders. The day-to-day cleaning and cooking, washing up and general services were done by camp men, the cooking requiring a permanent member of the staff for its supervision. For the general service, orderlies were chosen for the various duties required, and a new list posted up at equal intervals until, so far as possible, each man had done his share at the pleasant and the unpleasant tasks. The catering was carried on by a camp officer, and as food became more difficult to obtain, a larger proportion was purchased through the Unit Headquarters at Weymouth Street. An inspection of camp finances would not, it is believed, reveal extravagance in this direction. Plain fare, open air, and reasonably hard conditions of life certainly prevailed, and few who passed through the period of training did not feel the better for it.

The number of men in camp at a given time varied greatly, but fifty or sixty might be taken as an average over the greater part of the series. Sometimes the number rose much higher, and the congestion in the barn and the tents was a problem in arrangement for those in charge—not to mention the even graver problems of the camp kitchen in these days of food scarcity. At other times again the call for reinforcements would sound so insistently from the various branches of the Unit, both at home and abroad, that men would have to be drafted out in advance of the time-table of their training, and there would only be left a score or so, beyond the small permanent staff, to maintain the continuity. In a few cases, whole sections of the Unit were staffed by men trained together at the same camp. The crew of No. 16 Ambulance Train, for instance, was trained as a body at a camp held at Oxhey Grange in July and August, 1915; that of No. 17 Train at Jordans in November, 1915; that of the Hospital Ship *Western Australia* in March, 1916. In many ways this was the most satisfactory arrangement, but unfortunately it was not always practicable. But even although the men from a particular camp usually found themselves scattered among separate branches, they often retained a pleasant loyalty to

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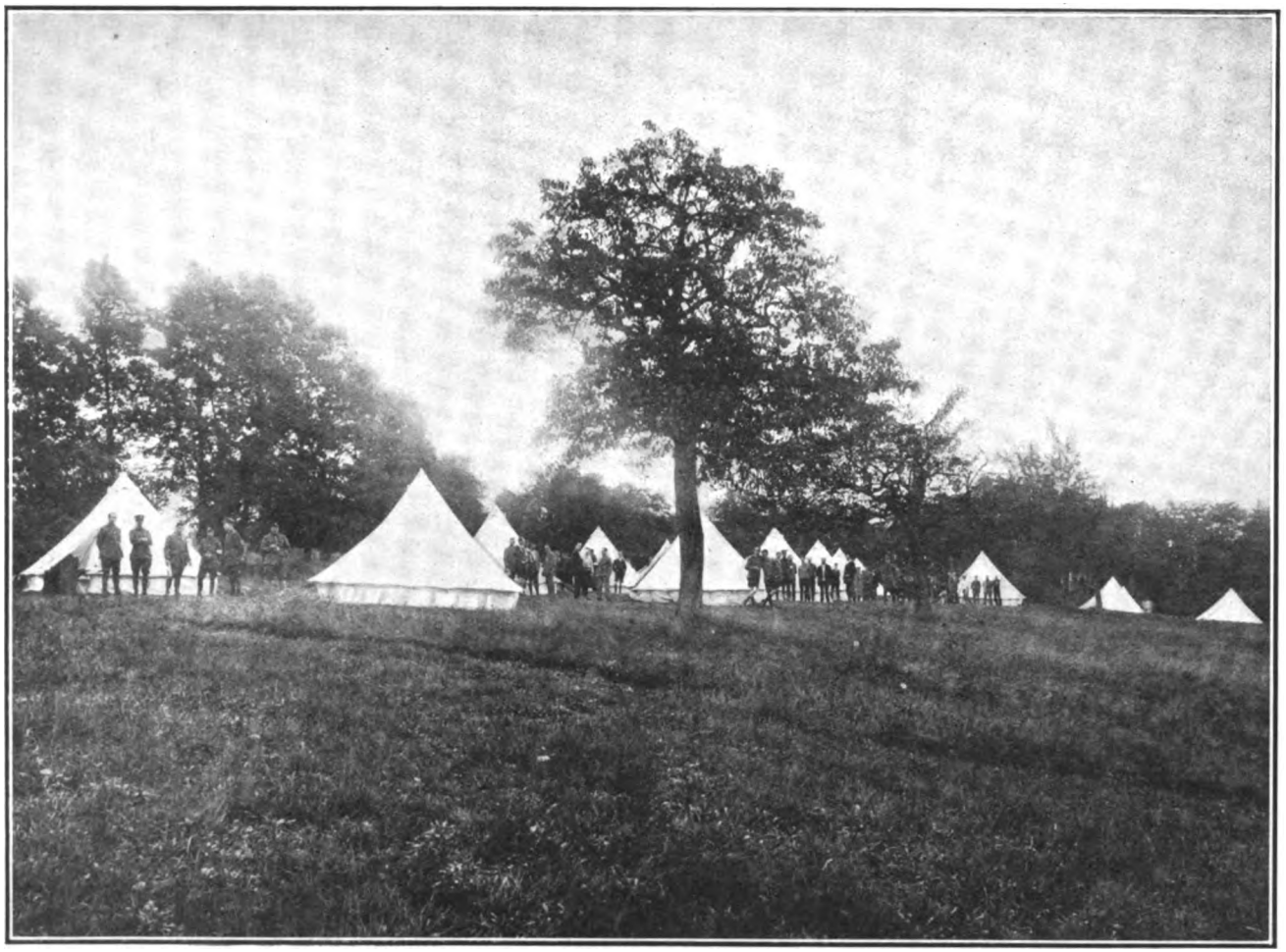

Plate XXXIII JORDANS CAMP. Facing p. 244

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their own fellow-campers which served them in good stead in moving from one section to another. Each camp had its distinctive number, and the mark of "J3" or "J7" or "J9" long remained a current token of comradeship.

It has been thought fit to confine this account of training to a plain statement of routine. Life at Jordans was certainly full of incident and often rich in laughter. Doubtless all who passed through the camp have each their own anecdotes and humorous recollections which they might have wished to see commemorated in these pages, but for such there could hardly be space. But space there must be for a tribute to the work of those who patiently bore the direction of routine work over a considerable space of time, and more especially to R. T. Handley, J. D. I. Hughes, and Bruce Graveley. The permanent staff at Jordans rendered a useful if unobtrusive service to the Unit, and contributed in no small measure to its success in more prominent scenes at home and abroad.

General Service Section.

The character and work of this section differed so widely from the main body of the Unit that it might almost form the subject of a separate account. In these pages we have only space to give a brief outline of its inception and scope.

The General Service Section was brought into existence in the early part of 1916, and was a direct result of the operation of the Military Service Acts of that year. In consequence of the reference to the F.A.U. of considerable numbers of men exempted conditionally by the tribunals, there arose the necessity of finding useful employment for men who for financial and other reasons could not be absorbed into the ambulance sections of the Unit. Some of these men were physically unfit to undertake general ambulance service; others felt that to take part in the work of the medical services of the Armies, either at home or abroad, would compromise their convictions in regard to military service. It was, however, found possible to find employment for such men under the ægis of the Unit in work of an agricultural or general nature. The General Service Section was therefore organised, in accordance with regulations drawn up by the Unit Committee and approved by the Government authorities concerned. George Peverett was, to a large extent, responsible for the efficient administration of the scheme. Special arrangements were made for receiving members destined for general service at the Jordans Camp, where many were trained or found temporary employment till a more permanent situation could be found for them. The larger proportion was engaged in agricultural work in many widely-scattered parts of the country, and an Agricultural Sub-Committee rendered valuable help in the placing and supervising of these members. In most cases the tribunals left the full supervision of the men to the Unit, and, although the great distances between the places of employment made direct contact obviously difficult, it was possible to keep in fairly regular touch with men on farms in all parts of England through George F. Mounsey, who did valuable work as inspector. Work in this Section was also found on occasion

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for members of the Unit invalided from the Foreign or Home Sections, either permanently or till such time as they were fit to rejoin the ambulance sections.

Apart from the agricultural section, there were a certain number placed in occupations of various kinds. Men were able to undertake educational or welfare work, to engage in the activities of the Friends' War Victims Relief Work, the Friends' Emergency Committee, or the Y.M.C.A., or in work so varied as that of building construction, surgical appliance making, forestry, flour-mills, or food factories.

At the end of the war the membership of this section had reached the total of 442, the majority of whom were employed on agriculture.

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CHAPTER III

THE FINANCE OF THE UNIT.

THE early Friends, in their quaint phrasing, used to tell us that no creature should be lost for lack of caretakers, and that we should always be ready to help one another in that which was the least love. The annals of the F.A.U. show that in this necessary backing for any large enterprise the Friends of to-day have acted according to the counsels of bygone generations. Without setting in too high a light the quiet tide of support which has borne the Unit along through its eventful voyage, it may yet be possible to indicate by a few prosaic statistics the volume of the help afforded.

The table that follows deals with four twelve-month periods from the formation of the Unit in the autumn of 1914 up to the time of the Armistice, and with one broken period covering the winding-up of the work since that date. Any who are desirous of fuller details may be referred to the series of reports and balance sheets, with lists of subscribers, printed from time to time in the pages and advertisement columns of the *Friend*, and separately reprinted and circulated to subscribers.

The printed lists divided subscriptions into three groups :—

(1) Home contributors.

(2) Contributions from Meetings, schools, groups of employees, collections, etc.

(3) American and Canadian contributions.

The periods are from November 1st to the following October 31st for the years 1914-15, 1915-16, 1916-17, and 1917-18, and for the winding-up period since November 1st, 1918.

Periods	Group (1)	Group (2)	Group (3)	Totals.
1914–15	£29,099 9 9	£1,424 19 0	£2,581 3 9	£33,105 12 6
1915–16	29,607 7 3	2,246 0 4	2,148 2 4	34,001 9 11
1916–17	27,899 2 8	1,599 0 9	1,675 3 1	31,173 6 6
1917–18	29,218 7 9	1,530 3 5	3,087 16 4	33,836 7 6
Since Nov. 1st, 1918.	4,988 13 10	360 0 8	920 9 3	6,269 3 9
Totals	£120,813 1 3	£7,160 4 2	£10,412 14 9	£138,386 0 2

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In addition to the foregoing, donations in France have been received amounting to about £550. The Friends of Birmingham and district, besides other help in kind, have maintained the Uffculme Hospital by subscriptions amounting to £4991 19s. 9d. A fund for the purchase of clothing, magazines, games and other requisites, and for a Christmas Fund, has been collected and administered by Lady Newman and Mrs. Arthur Rowntree, the subscriptions to which, up to 30th September, 1918, amounted to £559 19s. 7d.

In the table given above the Home contributions and Meeting collections, which amount together to £127,973 5s. 5d., came from the whole area covered by London and Dublin Yearly Meetings, and include generous help from Australasian Friends and from India, Ceylon, China and Madagascar, some of it coming from native churches. The Committee had regular and valued help from American Friends of all branches, and Canada Yearly Meeting, apart from some personal donations, sent a number of remittances, amounting in all to £1,353 7s. 8d. In 1917, £250 came from the British Isles Booth of the Chicago Allied Bazaar.

It will be seen that the donations and subscriptions shown in the table averaged per month for the four full years of the Unit's work as follows :—

	£	s.	d.
1st year	2,758	16	0
2nd year	2,833	9	2
3rd year	2,597	15	6
4th year	2,819	13	11

The steady flow of money month by month was much helped through a number of generous supporters giving regular donations, monthly or quarterly, to the amount of about £1,500 a month, and this greatly relieved the anxieties of the Treasurer and Committee. It is not easy to give the total number of subscribers, as in many cases an amount received was made up of a number of separate subscriptions, but the Treasurer estimates that at least 2,000 persons in the areas of London and Dublin Yearly Meetings contributed to the funds. The support came in part from members of the Unit and their relatives and friends, but also in very large measure from a wide circle of Friends and others interested in the work. The cost of the York Hospital, upwards of £3,500, came from one source, and there were other donations earmarked for special purposes, the Friends' War Victims Relief Committee providing a substantial sum for the expenses of the civilian relief work of the Unit. At the beginning of the Unit's work, the Committee refrained from making any appeal to the general public, desiring to rely in the first place on the personal interest evoked, and on the publicity accorded to the work in the columns of the *Friend* and in other quarters. This policy was maintained, and no general public appeal was made during the four-and-a-half years of the Unit's active work, but reports and lists of subscribers were from time to time printed in the *Friend* and circulated to subscribers. Almost every week accounts of the current work appeared in the *Friend*, and the Committee are greatly indebted to it, and to other papers,

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for the help thus given, as well as to all who contributed the articles. The Hon. Treasurer of the Unit, William C. Braithwaite, gave much time and forethought to the general financial arrangements, regulating them with a skill which deserves the cordial gratitude of the Committee and of the Unit as a whole. The detailed finance of the Unit was ably handled in a business-like fashion in the London office and at Dunkirk, and, in addition to auditing the accounts, the Hon. Auditor, Alfred Morland, gave much skilled assistance in supervising Unit finance.

The monthly expenditure, as shown by the Treasurer's balance sheets, including the York and Uffculme hospitals, works out as follows for the four years from November 1st, 1914, to October 31st, 1918:—

	£	s.	d.	
1st year	2376	0	0	per month.
2nd year	2666	0	0	do.
3rd year	2837	0	0	do.
4th year	2789	0	0	do.

It is at first sight surprising that, with the constantly increasing personnel engaged in the work the monthly average should have been kept so even, but it has to be remembered that the figure for the first year includes a considerable outlay for the installation of hospital work at Dunkirk, and that in most of the later developments in home hospitals, hospital ships, and ambulance trains, the bulk of the maintenance cost was defrayed by allowances paid, or material issued, by the authorities in respect of the services performed, on lines corresponding with those paid or issued to other departments of British Red Cross work. It must be remembered too, that the extraordinary expenses incurred in France during 1918 by the sudden recrudescence of civilian work, and by the moving of the Queen Alexandra Hospital from Malo to Petite Synthe, were met by liberal grants bestowed by the American Red Cross.

The cost of administration expenses in England, as shown by the audited cash accounts, was for the second year of work £1,233 os. od., for the third year, £1,757 os. od., and for the fourth year, £1833 os. od. The figure for the first year was not separately worked out.

It is impossible here to do more than refer to the generous help in kind, in the shape of motor cars, motor cycles, medical and surgical appliances, furnishing, office and hospital accommodation, clothing and food for relief purposes, and in many other ways, which was unstintedly given by friends of the Unit to the value of many thousands of pounds. Without this help, much of the work would have been far less effective and some developments could never have been undertaken. The sum total of these gifts meant a very great saving in the cost that had to be met out of subscriptions and donations.

Owing to the course of events in the closing months of the war, large sums of money came into the funds from the careful realisation in France of assets

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which, if the war had taken a less favourable turn, would have had little or no value. In the prudent conduct of affairs, the contingent value of these could not of course be taken into account, and they were treated as sunk capital. The Committee has already made some grants out of these surplus funds, and is at present considering the various ways in which they can best be utilised in accordance with the objects for which the Unit was established.

Apart altogether from the general funds of the Unit, the functions of the F.A.U. Maintenance Fund should be noted to make this chapter complete. Mention has already been made of the fact that members of the Unit, at home and abroad, were unpaid, and this principle was adhered to throughout. But for some members less fortunately placed than others the difficulty of carrying on, literally without a penny of income, became extreme as the war dragged on. To assist these men a Special Allowance Fund was established by a few sympathisers early in 1916, distinct from the Unit's funds, so that small allowances for the bare necessary expenses might be made. Thus fifteen months of the Unit's history had passed before any such allowances were made, although some of the early members were amongst the least well-to-do financially. And throughout the whole period of the war there were many men who enforced on themselves severe self-denial in order not to burden the fund without absolute necessity. The grants made rarely exceeded ten francs a month in France and ten shillings a month in England, sums which generally represented the recipient's sole income. During 1917 the proportion of members without means tended to rise, and at the end of that year it was decided to reconstitute the fund on a firmer basis. This was done by the institution of the Maintenance Fund, administered as before by the Deputy Adjutant in France (not the least difficult of his many duties), and in England by a Committee of members of the Unit under the chairmanship of Arnold S. Rowntree. As hitherto the allowances were only sufficient to meet the absolute necessities, and by careful supervision no call was made on the Unit's general funds. In France the Fund was practically independent, being maintained by donations from many members actually in France, and from the profits realised in the Unit canteens. During 1918, the Maintenance Fund received subscriptions from members and sympathisers amounting to about £1,400, of which sum £860 were distributed in these small private allowances, an indication of how valuable the existence of this sort of help was at that difficult time. On demobilisation too, the Maintenance Fund proved its value, for to a number of members left temporarily stranded with neither an income nor immediate chance of employment, grants amounting to more than £600 were made.

In this statement we have avoided detailed reference to the names of subscribers or the amounts given to the funds by them. Many of the smaller sums given probably represented a personal sacrifice and interest in the work no less than that which led others to give larger sums. And none of those who have helped would wish to divert attention from the work itself—the direct personal work of the men who loyally shaped and carried through the life-saving service recorded in these pages. To know that the money given allowed this service to be rendered is, we may be sure, reward enough to those who gave.

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APPENDIX

COMMITTEE OF THE FRIENDS' AMBULANCE UNIT, 1914—1919.

Sir George Newman, M.D., *Chairman.*
Wm. Charles Braithwaite, LL.B., *Hon. Treasurer.*
J. Raymond Little, *Hon. Secretary.*
Percy Alden, M.P.
The late J. Allen Baker, M.P.
Philip J. Baker, M.A. (O.C. 1914—1915).
Edward Cadbury, J.P.
The late E. Richard Cross, LL.B.
*Dr. Leonard Doncaster, F.R.S.
Rt. Hon. Joseph A. Pease, M.P. (Lord Gainford).
*George M. Gillett, L.C.C., J.P.
Sir Rickman J. Godlee, Bart., K.C.V.O.
William Harvey.
T. Edmund Harvey, M.P.
R. Borrough Hopkins.
*Ernest Jones
Alfred J. King.
John Henry Lloyd, J.P.
*Leslie B. Maxwell (Adjutant, 1914—15, O.C. 1915—17).
*Wm. Mordey (Adjutant, 1916—19).
J. Coleby Morland.
Dr. Humphrey Nockolds (P.M.O., 1914—19).
Arnold S. Rowntree, M.P.
Arthur Rowntree.
*Meaburn Tatham (O.C. 1918—1919).
Rt. Hon. J. W. Wilson, M.P.
*Herbert G. Wood, M.A.
*L. Hollingsworth Wood (New York).
Geoffrey W. Young.

*Joined the Committee subsequent to 1914.

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ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS.

FOREIGN SERVICE.

Abbatt, C. B.
Abbatt, C. P.
Abbott, R.
Abbs, Miss E. A.
Absalom, J. K.
Adams, H.
Addison, E.
Ade, F. C.
Alexander, Miss A.
Alexander, G. C.
Alexander, R. E.
Alexander, V. W.
Allen, Miss B. A.
Allen, D. R.
Alletson, L. G.
Alsop, H. F.
Altham, W. R.
Anderson, J.
Anderson, T. J.
Anderson, T. T.
Anger, F. B.
Ardley, A. F.
Ardley, B.
Ardley, F. J.
Armitage, H. A.
Armitage, J. W.
Armitage, N. H.
Armstrong, Miss A. B. (Mrs. MacCrimmon).
Armstrong, F. E.
Armstrong, R. A.
Arnold, L. G.
Ashby, C. L.
Ashford, Miss
Ashley, Miss B. M.
Attrill, A. J.
Awmack, E.

Backhouse, G. D.
Baker, A. R.
Baker, C. J.
Baker, E. M.
Baker, J. H.
Baker, J. S.
Baker, Miss M.
Baker, P. J.
Baker, R. D.
Baker, S. D.
Ball, P. W.
Barber, E. S.
Barbour, G. B.
Barker, M. T.
Barnes, J. H.
Barnett, T. H.
Barratt, M.
Barratt, P. K.
Barringer, L.
Barrow, Miss M. K.
Barrow, R. M.
Barter, Miss E. M.
Basébè, J. B.
Bass, W. N.
Basson, G. J.
Batterham, D. J.
Battrick, E.
Bayliss, V. S.
Beeby, A. J.
Behrens, A. G.
Bell, Miss G. E.
Bell, N. H.
Bellows, Miss K.
Bendall, A. C.
Bendall, T. B.
Bengough, Miss E. R.
Benington, H.
Benson, L. E.
Bentley, B. A.
Best, G. A.
Bevington, G.
Bibby, E. E.
Bibby, J. R.
Bibby, T.
Bigland, R. A.
Bilton, J. E.
Binns, H. G.
Binyon, D. H.
Bird, C. H. W.
Bird, Harold R.
Bird, Hugh R.
Bird, W. J.
Birkett, T.
Birnage, N.
Birrell, J. R.
Black, N.
Blackburn, L. C.
Blake, A. McT.
Blelloch, D. H.
Bliss, J. G.
Bobbett, S. F.
Boddy, P. J.
Bollam, E. S.
Bolton, A. T.
Bond, E. S.
Bone, W.
Booth-Clibborn, A. A.
Borwick, Miss D.
Bower, J. H.
Bowker, O.
Bowley, R. E.
Bowser, A. E.
Bracey, F.
Bradley, D.
Bradley, R. H.
Bradshaw, S. W.
Brady, E. R.
Brain, J. A.
Bransby, H.
Braund, G. H.
Brazier, H. B.
Briggs, D. B.
Broadhead, J. E.
Broadhead, J. G.
Broadhead, W. C.
Brockbank, W.
Brook, R. H.
Brooks, A. B.
Brooks, C. M.
Brooks, D. C. M.
Brown, C. R.
Brown, C. V.
Brown, H. T.
Brown, J. W.
Brown, L. W.
Brown, Miss M. A.
Brown, W. M.
Bubb, W. H.
Bunch, Miss J.
Bunting, H. F.
Burke, Miss M. D.
Burn, T. R. G.
Burrows, G. L.
Burton, John
Burton, Joseph
Burtt, A. W.
Burtt, G. E.
Burtt, H. H.

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Burtt, P. A.
Burtt, T.
Butler, Miss C. M.
Butler, H. W.
Butler, J. N.
Butler, J. W.
Butler, P. J.
Butler, W. H.

Cadbury, L. J.
Cadbury, Miss M. J. (Mrs. W. E. Greeves).
Cadbury, P. S.
Cadman, F. H.
Cadoux, C. J.
Callen, W. W.
Calpin, G. H.
Campion, S. H.
Candelatt, W.
Carey, H. L.
Carr, J. S.
Carr, R. S.
Carr, W. R.
Carrodus, G. W.
Carrodus, J. T.
Carter, H. B.
Carter, R. C.
Catchpool, E. St. J. P.
Catchpool, T. C. P.
Cattell, Miss C. L.
Chalkley, H. J.
Champion, Miss D. A.
Chandler, A.
Charnley, R.
Cheney, H. L.
Chester, R. C.
Chesterman, P. G.
Christy, Mrs. E. B.
Churcher, R. A.
Clark, H. B.
Clark, H. G.
Clark, W. E.
Clements, J.
Clemes, A. W.
Clery, A. A. A.
Clibborn, A. S.
Clifford, R. F. W.
Clough, H.
Clowe, J.
Coates, A. I.
Cobb, Miss V.
Colclough, A.
Cole, F. G.
Cole, S.
Cole, S. W.
Colles, C.
Collier, D. W.
Collier, Mrs.
Collins, P. F.
Collins-Williams, A. C.
Compton, R. H.
Constable, E. A.
Conway, Miss B. A.
Cook, J. B.
Cooper, E.
Cooper, J. H.
Cooper, N. C.
Cooper, T. E.
Cooper, W. L.
Coote, C.
Corder, S.
Cotes, V. G. S.
Cottam, R.
Cotterell, A. N.
Cotterell, A. P.
Cotterell, B. H.
Cotterell, G. S.
Cotterell, W. H.
Cottrell, F. S.
Cottrell, W. G.
Cousins, C. H.
Cox, H.
Crawford, Miss M.
Crow, T. L.
Crowhurst, H. G.
Cumberland, S.
Curnock, D. R.
Cuthbertson, J. H.

Dale, W.
Dann, J. D.
Darby, H. B.
Darbyshire, J. W.
Darbyshire, W. E.
Davenport, J.
Davies, J. R.
Davies, M.
Daws, R.
Day, J. B.
Deane, B. F.
Dell, M. O.
Devereux, L. W.
Devitt, R. T.
De Wind, Miss E. C.
Dickinson, S. H.
Dingle, C. F.
Dinsdale, H. W.
Dixon, R.
Dodd, A. J.
Dodd, E. E.
Dodgshun, E. J.
Doncaster, L.
Done, J. T.
Douglas, J. M.
Douglas, W. F.
Dove, R. T.
Drakard, Miss M.
Dryden, S.
Duguid, J. B.
Duke, B. M.
Duke, H. M.
Dunn, J.
Dunning, E. W.
Dunning, H.
Durance, H. A.
Durell, R.
Durell, W.
Dutson, W. J. F.
Dyne, H. M.
Dyne, W. B.
Dyson, P. E.

Earp, J. R.
East, R.
Eckersley, H.
Eckersley, S. B.
Eddington, A. J.
Edmonds, A. C.
Edmonds, H. L.
Edmondson, H. H.
Eliott, D.
Elliott, C. A.
Elliott, F.
Elliott, Miss M.
Ellis, Miss D. M. B.
Ellis, E. W.
Ellis, G. H.
Ellis, H.
Ellis, J.
Ellis, Thomas
Ellis, T. L.
Emson, E.
England, E. H.
England, N. B.
English, G. F.
English, H.
English, J. M.
Enock, A. G.
Entwistle, A.
Eppstein, J. C. N.
Evans, E. J.
Evans, H.
Evans, M.
Evans, Miss M. E.
Evans, R.
Evill, L. H.

Fairbourn, F.
Falkner, C. A.
Fardon, A. H.
Fardon, H. J.
Farmery, A.
Farrell, J. W.
Farrell, John
Faux, E. P.
Fear, E. B.
Fenton, Harry
Fenton, Henry
Feugard, H. W.
Fidler, G. E.
Field, H. A. M.
Fishwick, J.
Fletcher, B. A.
Follows, Miss A. B.
Ford, G. L.
Forrester-Paton, J.
Foster, Miss M. E.
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Foulds, R. P.
Foulds, S.
Fountain, F.
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Francis, Miss E. M.
Frith, E. A.
Frith, F. E.
Frizzell, L. T.
Fry, C. E.
Fry, J. N. P.
Fryer, J. B.
Fullwood, J. H.
Furber, F. W.

Gaffee, W. C.
Gammon, W. A.
Gane, C. E.
Gardner, A. W.
Garner, O. W.
Garrett, A. A.
Garwood, R. T.
Gawith, S. H.
Gawn, A. W.
Gayner, W. H.
Geale, A.
Geering, W. T.
Geldard, Miss E.
Genders, C. H.
Genders, J. A.
Gibb, R.
Gibson, H.
Gilbert, L. H.
Gilderdale, H. A.
Gill, E. L.
Gill, H. R.
Gill, J. A.
Gill, T. E.
Gillett, Dr. H. T.
Gillman, F. C.
Gilpin, C. J.
Gissing, A. C.
Glanfield, S. J.
Glynn, S. M.
Glynn, W. M.
Goddard, C. V.
Godden, E. W.
Goodall, E. W.
Goodall, P. D.
Goodall, W.
Gooday, A. F.
Goodbody, D.
Goodbody, J. E.
Goodwill, J. J.
Goodwin, J. G.
Goodwin, J. H.
Goss, F.
Goss, R.
Gould, T. R.
Grace, E. G.
Graham, J. I.
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Graveson, A. W.
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Gray, D.
Gray, J. H.
Greaves, Miss M. L.
Green, A.
Green, G. C.
Green, K. H.
Green, L. G.
Greenbank, J. A.
Greenough, F. G. MacM.
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Greenwood, L. H. G.
Greeves, Miss A. K.
Greeves, J.
Greeves, T. M.
Greeves, W. E.
Greg, Miss M. H.
Greg, W. W.
Gregory, H. I.
Gregory, G.
Grice, Miss K. E.
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Gripper, L. A.
Gripper, N. E.
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Guest, J. L.
Gunn, J. A.

Hadgraft, F. M.
Haigh, C. R.
Hall, A. K.
Hall, J. H.
Hall, Richard W.
Hall, Miss S.
Hallatt, J. V.
Hamilton, A. S.
Hamilton, J. A. K.
Handley, R. T.
Hardern, L. R.
Harding, S. H.
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Harper, G. J.
Harris, L. M.
Harris, L.
Harris, R. S.
Harrison, C. A.
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Harvey, T. E.
Harvey, W. F.
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Hill, Archibald E.
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Hodgkiss, A. J.
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Horsnaill, Herbert L.
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Littleboy, M.
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Lound, B. R.
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Messer, W.
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Neave, B. W.
Nedderman, G. H.
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Nelson, A.
Nettleton, D.
Nevinson, C. R. W.
Nevinson, H. W.
Newbery, A. E.
Newby, W. T.
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O'Brien, T. H.
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Oliver, K. S.
Osborn, R. J.
Ostler, W. B.
Owen, W. B.
Owst, G. R.
Oyston, M.

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Park, T.
Parker, R. T.
Parsons, A. E.
Parton, F. L.
Patching, D. B.
Patching, G. F.
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Payne, R. R. B.
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Pearl, R. T.
Pearson, A.
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Pease, C.
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Peile, T. M.
Peirson, C. J.
Peirson, S. F.
Penny, H. L.
Penrose, A. P. D.
Penrose, L. S.
Perkins, J. S.
Pettifer, E. W.
Phillips, H. A.
Phipps, K. C. G.
Pickard, W. H.
Pierce, E.
Pigou, A. C.
Pim, S.
Pimm, L.
Pocock, L. C.
Pollard, H. E.
Pollard, R. S.
Pool, G. H.
Pope Russell, A.
Popplestone, C. G.
Porteous, R.
Porter, R. J.
Potts, T. V.
Powell, J. W.
Priestley, A.
Priestman, Basil
Priestman, Bernard
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Priestman, K. M.
Priestman, N.
Prior, J. P.
Procter, B.
Procter, E.
Proctor, C. L.
Pugh, S. T.
Pullman, Miss B.
Pumphrey, G. S.
Pumphrey, J. L.
Pumphrey, O. N.
Pumphrey, T.
Pursaill, R. G.

Quarterman, G.
Quinn, J. H., junr.

Radclyffe, F. G. P.
Ransome, E. O.
Rattray, M. H.
Ray, G. H.
Ray, Miss K. L.
Read, F. S.
Reader, Miss M. A.
Ready, G.
Redfern, L.
Rees, D. P.
Rees, J. P.
Rees, J. R.
Rees, R. D.
Reid, J. B.
Repton, Miss H. K.
Reynolds, R. W.
Rice, E., junr.
Rice, T. A. H.
Richardson, L. F.
Richardson, S. E.
Riley, G. W.
Riley, W. G.
Ripley, W. G.
Ripley, Wilfred
Roberts, A.
Roberts, H.
Roberts, R. F.
Robertson, Miss A.
Robertson, E. H. M.
Robertson, Miss S.
Robinson, B. I.
Robinson, Miss E.
Robinson, G. S.
Robinson, R. H.
Robson, A. S.
Roffey, A. E.
Rooper, R. B.
Rose, D. B.
Rose, R. W.
Rowlands, A.
Rowlands, H.
Rowntree, A. C.
Rowntree, C.
Rowntree, Harold
Rowntree, J. S.
Rowntree, L. E.
Rowntree, S.
Rowntree, W.
Rowson, R. H.
Roylance, A.
Roylance, W.
Rushworth, L.
Russell, C. E.
Russell, E. C.
Rutter, W. F.
Rutter, C. L.

Sainty, V.
Sanders, J. W.
Sandon, F.
Sandwith, B. R.
Satchwell, C.
Saxby, H. G.
Scholefield, R. B.
Scott, T. W.
Scrimgeour, R. W.
Sedgwick, E.
Seekings, Miss M. H.
Seward, L. C.
Shaw, R.
Sibson, M. D.
Sibson, R. D.
Simmonds, A. G.
Simons, H.
Simpson, A. H.
Simpson, R. B.
Slade, Miss
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Smithson, M. S.
Smithson, N. A.
Sokell, L. A.
Soltau, R. H.
Southall, C. L.
Spalding, R. H.
Spaull, B. R. H.
Spence, R. L.
Spence, T. E.
Spencer, R.
Spivey, F.
Springhall, Miss G. A. M.
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Stamper, H.
Stanley, F. H.
Stanley, W. C.
Stansfield, M.
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Staynes, J. L.
Stebbings, W. H.
Steel, J. P.
Steele, A.
Steele, H. R. S.
Steele, J. C.
Stepanian, A. S. der
Stephens, H. N.
Stephens, J. S.
Sterne, W. K.
Stevens, E.
Stevens, G. C.
Stevens, H.
Stoner, S. H.
Stopford, R. J.
Street, A. E.
Street, H.
Sturge, P. D.
Surman, Miss E. S.
Surridge, W.
Sutherland, H. H. D.
Swain, N.

Tallerman, K. H.
Tarrant, W. N. H.
Tatham, M.
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Tawell, T. E.
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Taylor, E. N.
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Taylor, T. C.
Taylor, Miss U. M.
Taylor, Miss W. E.
Terrell, H. S.
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Thomas, H. A.
Thomas, Miss S.
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Thompson, F. G.
Thompson, Geoffrey
Thompson, Gilbert
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Thompson, J. B.
Thomson, Miss J. M.
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Thomson, Dr. T. T.
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Thorp, R. W.
Thorpe, J. W.
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Tiley, Miss E. M.
Tilsey, C. J.
Tiplady, A. L.
Tomkinson, L.
Tomlin, H.
Tomlinson, A.
Townsend, V. W.
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Trent, G. E. S.
Trezise, W. W.
Tuke, F.
Turnbull, R. S.
Turner, C. F.
Turner, J.
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Unwin, E.
Utterson-Kelso, Miss C. A. D.

Veall, O. G.
Vickers, W.
Vickery, A. H.
Vine, B. T.
Virgo, S. J. E.

Waddington, H.
Waites, R.
Walker, A. D.
Wallice, D.
Wallis, C. E.
Wallis, E. A.
Wallis, Eliot
Wallis, T. H.
Wallis, W. P.
Walpole, L. L.
Walton, J.
Ward, G. H.
Ward, Wm. E.
Wardell, C. W.
Wardell, H. J.
Warner, M.
Waterfall, W.
Watkins, C. L.
Watkins, J. O.
Watson, W. H.
Watt, N. J. M.
Watts, H.
Watts, W. T.
Way, E. J.
Webster, A. B.
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Wells, G. W.
Wells, H.
Welsh, Miss J. O.
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Westover, J. A. A.
Wetherall, F. H.
Whale, J. S.
Wheeler, F. K.
Whitaker, J.
Whitaker, J. E. F.
Whitby, R. E.
White, A. M.
White, F. C.
White, F. P.
White, Miss H. M. (Mrs. E. W. Smerdon)
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White, John
White, J. S.
Whiteley, C. E.
Whitford, Miss H. C.
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Wigham, W. S.
Wigley, P. H.
Wiles, A. S.
Wiles, W.
Wilkinson, Miss F. M.
Williams, C.
Williams, E. S.
Williams, R. W.
Williams, W. E.
Williamson, T.
Willmore, C. F.
Wills, E. F.
Willson, M. A.
Wilmot, H. R.
Wilson, A. F.
Wilson, A. L.
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Wilson, E. V.
Wilson, Howard
Wilson, Miss J. L.
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Young, G. W.

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Ashton, C. F.

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Bowen, N. M.
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Fyfe, Mrs. H. S.

Geddes, Miss J. B.
George, S. S.
Gill, W. C.
Gloyne, S. R.
Golding, L.
Goodall, E. H.
Goodbody, Miss M. E.
Gooderham, T. G.
Granger, A. H.
Gravely, A. B.
Green, Wm.
Greener, H. P.
Guest, W.

Hadley, A.
Hancock, A.

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Hands, P. T.
Hannah, A. E.
Hardie, Miss D. M. W.
Hardwick, A. S.
Harris, G. R.
Hart, Miss G. M. L.
Hartley, A.
Harvey, E. C.
Haydon, A.
Hendley, M. L.
Herbert, John H.
Heywood, J.
Hief, F. R. G.
Hinchliffe, K.
Hobart, F. G.
Hodgetts, P.
Hodgson, F. E.
Hogben, G. H.
Hooper, Miss R. E.
Hopkins, R. Broughton
Horniman, Miss D.
Horton, H.
Howkins, E. H.
Hudson, W. H.
Hughes, K. E.
Humphreys, J.
Hunt, B.

Jackson, T.
Jagger, J.
Jarvis, Miss E.
Jenkinson, J. T.
Johnson, F. R.
Johnson, H. B.
Johnson, M. C.
Johnson, Wm. (Nott.)
Johnson, W. N.
Jones, C. T.
Jones, L.
Jones, S. L.

Keighley, M. C.
King, L.
Kirk, W. F.
Kitching, G.
Kitching, R. C.
Kitson, J.
Klein, Miss E. M.
Klein, Miss K. E. (Mrs. R. S. Lambert).
Knaggs, M.
Knox, Miss E. A.

Lambert, R. S.
Leach, L. C.
Leaver, N. H.
Leck, A. S.
Leigh, E. S.
Lenton, H.
Lewis, E.
Little, Mrs. J. R.
Lunt, W. T.

McConnell, W.
Mackie, Miss E.
Marsden, A.
Marshall, J.
Matthews, S. L.
Meek, D. H.
Melhuish, A. J.
Midgley, P. H.
Miles, S. R.
Miller, A. A.
Miller, J. R.
Millthorpe, Miss D.
Milner, H.
Milnes, A. W.
Morris, Miss M. E.
Morris, Miss Minnie
Morton, C.
Murray, J. P. W.

Newman, Lady
Nichols, E.
Nidd, H. T.
Nightingale, S.
Nurse, F.

Offord, F.

Parker, W. W.
Parley, J. E.
Parrott, F. W.
Patrickson, J. N.
Pearman, A.
Perrin, G. E.
Peverett, G.
Pickard, B.
Platts, Miss E. M.
Plummer, Miss L.
Podger, J.
Pollard, S.
Price, C.
Price, H. K.
Priestman, A.
Priestman, Miss J. (Mrs. Ray).

Rackham, W.
Renwick, Miss R. M.
Reynolds, C.
Richards, A.
Rivers, J.
Roberts, E. A.
Rose, D. J.
Rose, Miss W.
Rowland, Miss L.
Rowntree, Mrs. A.
Rowntree, J. D.
Rusden, Miss A. M. V.

Sanderson, W. E.
Saunders, H. L.
Scott, A.
Scott, P.
Secret, R.
Sessions, Miss E. M.
Shard, G. E.
Sherwood, A. H.
Simpson, G.
Sisson, M. A.
Smart, F. B.
Smith, Harry
Smith, H. V.
Smith, Luther
Snowdon, V.
South, J.
Southall, Miss M. H.
Spencer-Smith, C. F.
Start, E. C.
Sterne, W. K.
Stride, W. H. B.
Summerfield, Miss L. M.
Sunderland, W. D.
Swaddle, A.
Sykes, N.

Tait, F.
Taylor, H. W.
Taylor, L.
Taylor, R. H.
Thomas, R. P. D.
Thurgood, F.
Tilney, F. W.
Toller, J.
Travers, H. M. O.
Tucker, E. F.
Turnbull, A. W.
Tydeman, W. E.
Tyler, H. V.

Upchurch, W. S.

Vickery, J. D.

Waller, Miss E. A.
Walmesley, A. A.
Wancke, Miss H. M.
Watson, W. C.
Webber, H.
Wedmore, F. H.
Westwood, J.
Wharton, G.
Whatmough, C.
White, H. D. J.
Whiteley, E.
Whiting, J. R. S.
Whiting, N.
Whittles, E.
Whittles, H.
Wilcox, L.
Wilkins, Miss V. M.
Williams, Wm.
Wilson, Miss A. M.
Wilson, E. G.
Wilson, M.
Wilton, J. R.
Witchell, S. J.
Wood, H. R. B.
Wood, H.
Woodroffe, Miss E. J.
Worsdell, G. F.
Wright, Miss A.
Wright, J. V.

Yeomans, J.

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HOME GENERAL SERVICE (ONLY).

Abraham, W. H.
Adams, T. W. (Slough)
Alexander, E. R.
Alexander, H. G.
Allen, S. R.
Andrew, C. G. L.
Appleton, W. R.
Ashmore, A.

Bailey, N.
Baker, E. J.
Baker, G. J. M.
Baker, H. E.
Baker, J. L.
Baker, O.
Baker, P. W.
Banks, F. H.
Barnett, B. H.
Barnfather, J. R.
Baxter, A. G.
Bayliss, H. E.
Beakbane, T. C.
Bearcroft, G. H.
Beaty, E. J.
Belchambers, H.
Bell, I. C.
Bennett, F.
Bentley, W. H.
Bevan, E. G.
Biggs, G. P.
Binding, G.
Birch, J. W.
Bishop, W. W.
Blackburn, A. V.
Blackwell, A.
Blamires, C.
Blunsom, R.
Blunsom, W. A.
Bond, A. V.
Booth, M.
Bowden, H. L. J.
Bowler, R. J.
Bowles, R.
Bown, F. B.
Bown, J. D.
Boxell, P.
Bradley, W. H. J.
Brambley, R. L. G.
Briggs, A.
Bromley, T. R.
Brownett, C. E.
Bull, G. F.
Burke, W. A.
Burtt, E. G.
Bush, E. C.

Calvert, E. R.
Cambridge, F. R.
Carter, A. F.
Carter, G. T.
Carter, J. N.
Castle, H. F.
Castles, N.
Castree, A. E.
Catchpool, H. K. G. P.
Chappelow, E. B. W.
Charlson, Edward
Charlson, Ernest
Chipchase, C. E.
Chiverton, W. W.
Churcher, S. A.
Churcher, W. W.
Clark, J. S.
Clarke, F. J.
Clarke, W. T.
Clayton, C. E. A.
Clayton, H.
Clements, T. C.
Clements, W. J. F.
Cleobury, F. H.
Colwell, E. G.
Comaish, J. H.
Cookson, S. J.
Coombe, T. H.
Corrin, W.
Couchman, W. G.
Crick, H. A.
Cumber, P. C.
Cumberland, G.

Daniels, E.
Davies, G. M. L.
Davies, J.
Davies, J. J.
Davis, A. M.
Daws, E. W.
Deacock, A. S.
Dean, T. C. J.
Dearden, J. W.
Dennis, H.
Dewsberry, C.
Diamond, H. A.
Dickinson, R.
Dix, W. K.
Donelly, N.
Douglas, W. H.
Downes, J. W.
Drake, H. J.
Drewe, C. C.
Drewe, R. W.
Druce, J. G. F.
Dry, F. W.
Dudley, B.
Dunlop, R. O.

Ebeling, H. P.
Edmondson, S.
Elliott, T. C.
Ellis, L.
England, J. W.
Evans, D.

Farley, P. W.
Farrington, C. H.
Fassam, T. H.
Fawcett, F.
Firmin, J. A.
Fordham, R. R.
Forrester, C. R.
Foster, E. R.
Fox, F. W.
Foyle, W. V.
Freem, T. S.
Freer, W. G.
Friend, S.
Fursland, W. C.

Garlick, G. T.
Gibbins, R.
Giles, R. J.
Giles, W. H.
Gillard, F. E.
Gitsham, E.
Goddard, W. E.
Gomersall, H. S.
Goode, A.
Goodenough, H.
Goosey, F. B.
Graham, R. B.
Grant, J. A.
Grant, W. G.
Gray, H.
Gray, J. G.
Greenwood, M. R.
Griffiths, F.
Gunston, W.

Hall, C. E.
Hall, G. F.
Hall, J.
Hall, Reg. W.
Hancock, F. H.
Harris, H. W.
Harris, S. E.
Hart, H. W.
Hartley, T.
Harwood, F.
Hazleton, W. S.
Heale, A. J.
Henry, J. G.
Hetherington, R.
Hewitt, A. T. M.
Hickling, E. A.
Hipsley, F. W.
Hipwood, F.
Hiscox, R. T.
Hobson, A. S.
Hodge, C. V.
Hodge, E. W.
Hodgetts, J.
Holdstock, F.
Holmes, F.
Holmes, G.
Holmes, H.
Holttum, H. B.
Hookey, S. G.

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Horn, J. A.
Horsman, W. K.
Horsnaill, A. H.
Horsnaill, Headley
Howard, B. A.
Howard, F.
Howe, J.
Howe, G. P.
Hoyland, G.
Hudson, Alfred J.
Hudson, Arthur J.
Hunt, J.
Hunt, S. H.
Hutchinson, H. P.
Hutchinson, W.

Ineson, A.
Ingham, G. F.
Ittner, C. V.

Jackson, W. H. McI.
Jeffrey, L. F.
Jenkins, E. J.
Jennings, G. S.
Jennings, S. S.
Jennings, W. E.
John, J. A.
Johnson, Wm. (York)
Jones, S. J.
Jones, W. O.

Kaye, T.
Kelsall, G. M.
Kempster, F. G.
Kennell, F. G.
Kershaw, J.
Kidd, T. H.
King, D. H.
Kinnish, E. D.
Kirwin, C. H.
Kitson, W.
Knight, T. B.
Knowles, C. W.

Lamb, E. W.
Lambert, P. M.
Latchmore, T. W.
Law, E.
Law, M., junr.
Lawson, J. W.
Leary, E. E.
Leary, J. W.
Leicester, W. M.
Lingford, A.
Littleboy, Gerald
Lodge, S. D.
Lodge, T.
Lovedee, W. H.

McAnally, A.
Maclean, H.
Mandale, M. E.
Marsh, J. P.
Martin, J. A.
Mayne, W. C. T.
Molyneaux, H.
Moore, H. F.
Moore, H. R. T.
Moore, T. B.
Morgan, E. W.
Morris, S.
Morrison, S. A.
Mounsey, G. F.
Murray, S.
Muschamp, Joseph
Muschamp, S.
Muxlow, J. W.

Near, S. R.
Neeve, C. A.
Newbold, G. R.
Nunney, R.
Nurse, E.
Nuttall, B.

Oakes, E. C.
Ormerod, J.
Osborn, E.
Osborn, H.

Palmer, A. R.
Parley, N. I.
Parsons, H. A.
Parsons, W. B.
Pask, A. F.
Pask, R. W.
Payne, A. W.
Pearson, D.
Phillips, M. C.
Phillips, W. H.
Pile, H. W.
Pippett, R. S.
Pittaway, W. B.
Porter, W. T.
Postans, W. H.
Potter, T. H. H.
Poulton, W.
Pratt, C. W.
Preston, W.
Price, F. H.
Price, T.

Ray, D. N.
Read, W. R.
Rees, Robt.
Richards, G. E.
Riches, J. F.
Robertson, R.
Robinson, H. W.
Robinson, W. A.
Rogers, H. E.
Rose, A. W.
Rose, I. F.
Rowles, S. C.
Rowntree, Herbert
Ryland, H.
Sandwith, R.
Sargent, A.
Scholes, W.
Seaman, A. P.
Searle, A. F.
Severn, E. H.
Seymour, H.
Shapland, H. P.
Sim, G. R.
Singer, E. H.
Smalley, A.
Smith, A. G.
Smith, F. A. C.
Smith, J. P.
Smith, T. J.
Smurthwaite, J. S.
Smyth, J. G.
Snook, L. J.
Soar, A. G.
Somner, E. W.
Southgate, H. O.
Standen, D. J.
Stanger, P. W.
Stapleton, A. L.
Starke-Jones, C. P.
Stephens, G. G.
Stidder, O. S.
Stocks, G. T.
Stone, H. J.
Stone, J. G.
Stratton, C.
Strevens, C. F.
Styles, J. C.
Summerford, F. H.

Taberner, S. E.
Tait, D.
Tansley, C. F.
Tatham, G. W.
Taylor, E.
Taylor, F. C.
Taylor, J. E. T.
Temple, F. L.
Theobald, R. F.
Thompson, Arnold
Thompson, A. H.
Thompson, E. R.
Thorley, C. P.
Thorne, W. J. T.
Throssell, E. C.
Thrower, H. E.
Tiplady, R.
Tomlinson, J. S.
Tompkins, A.
Tompkins, F. G.
Trapnell, A. L.
Truswell, P.
Turvey, J. H.
Twyman, F.

Viner, F. W.

Waites, B.
Walker, F. A.

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Walls, I.
Walls, James
Walls, John
Walls, R.
Walls, T.
Ward, R. F.
Ward, Walter
Wareham, P.
Watkins, R. B.
Watson, G. A.
Watts, E.
Watts, H. J.
Wells, T.
Whaite, H. C.
Whitcombe, A
White, A.
White, Herbert
Whiteley, H. A.
Whiting, J. R.
Whitlock, A. J.
Whitlow, J. P.
Whittaker, J.
Williams, A. R.
Williams, E. G.
Williams, L.
Wilson, C. B.
Wilson, F. M. W.
Wilson, H. L.
Wilson, S. G.
Winders, E. G J
Winn, H. P.
Winter, D. T.
Winter, L. E.
Winton, F. R.
Wishart, W.
Witherford, G. H.
Wood, F.
Wood, H. R.
Wood, J. J.
Woodhead, G. A.
Woodrow, J. W.
Wright, R. W.
Wrigley, F. R

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MEMBERS WHO DIED ON SERVICE WITH THE UNIT.

M. T. Barker	.. ..	Died	Sept., 1915
T. H. Barnett	.. ..	Died	Sept., 1915
L. H. Evill	.. ..	Died	Oct., 1918
J. W. Greenwood	..	Died	May, 1916
N. E. Gripper	.. ..	Killed	May, 1918
H. P. Hutchinson	..	Died	Oct., 1918
H. H. Jackson	.. ..	Killed	May, 1918
L. G. Jarvis	.. ..	Died	Nov., 1918
Miss K. F. Kinnear, V.A.D.	.. ..	Died	Sept., 1917
F. O. Kitching	.. ..	Killed	Aug., 1918
W. Messer	.. ..	Killed	Nov., 1915
G. R. Newbold	..	Died	Dec., 1918
R. J. Porter	.. ..	Died	Jan., 1918
C. Priestman	.. ..	Killed	Aug., 1918
C. L. Proctor	.. ..	Killed	Aug., 1918
J. B. Reid	.. ..	Died	July, 1916
W. K. Smith	.. ..	Died	May, 1917
F. G. Taylor	.. ..	Killed	Sept., 1915
J. S. White	.. ..	Died	June, 1917
T. R. Winter	.. ..	Died	Nov., 1917
J. F. W. Woodwiss	..	Died	Oct., 1918

THE FOLLOWING HAVE DIED SINCE LEAVING THE UNIT.

Anderson, T. J.
Eckersley, H.
Greeves, T. M.
Haskins, F. W.
Hosegood, G. L.
Jones, J.
Meek, D. H.
Merttens, F. R.
Palmer, E. J.
Parton, F. L.
Priestman, K. M.
Quarterman, G.
Robinson, Miss E.
Rooper, R. B.
Rowntree, L. E.
Simmonds, A. G.
Stidder, O. S.

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SKETCH MAP

TO ILLUSTRATE

SECTORS SERVED

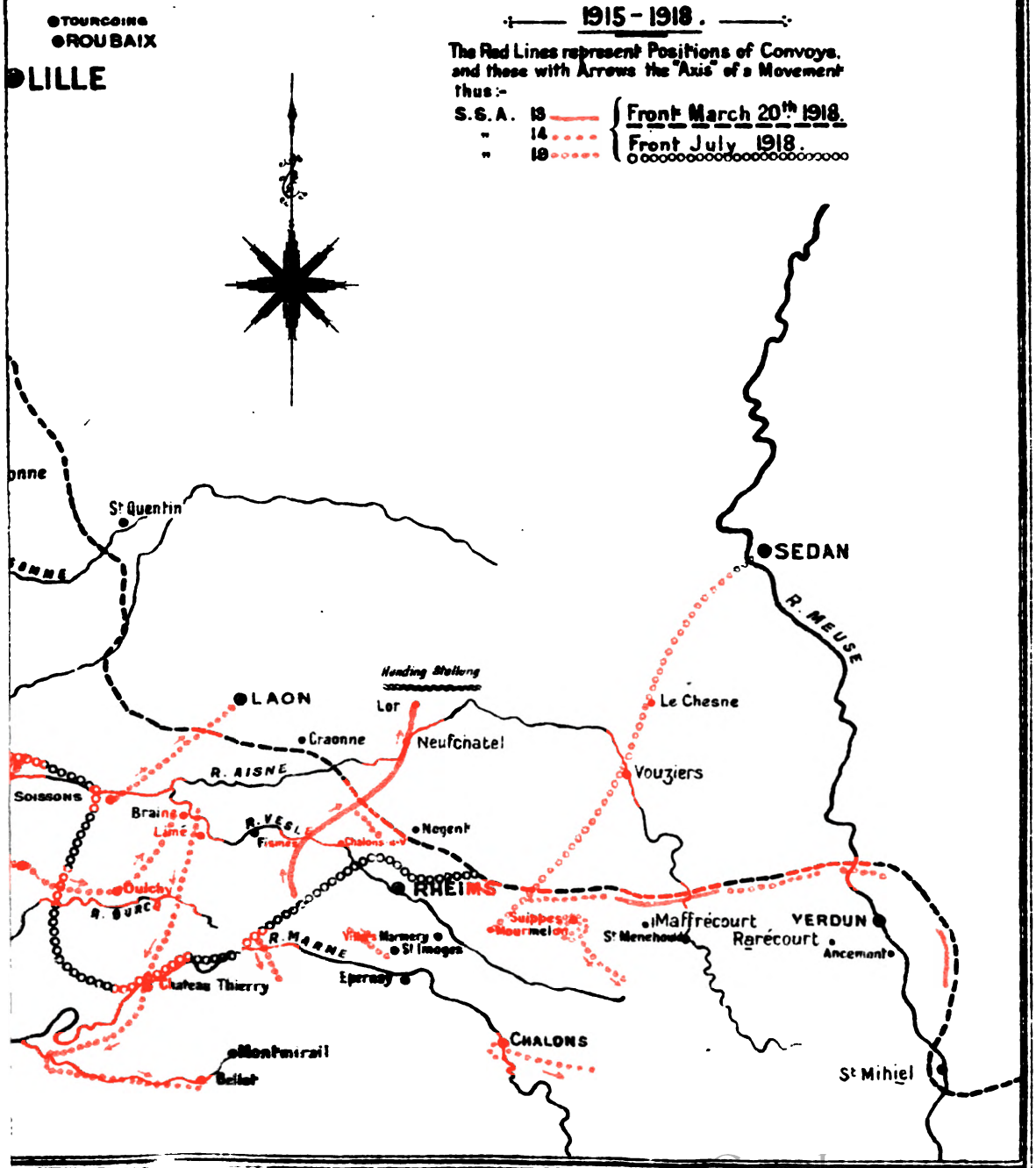
BY

S.S.A's, 13, 14 & 19.

1915 - 1918.

The Red Lines represent Positions of Convoys, and those with Arrows the "Axis" of a Movement thus :-

S.S.A. 13 ——— Front March 20th 1918.
" 14 ····· Front July 1918.
" 19 ○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○



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